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THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

A STUDY IN THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

BY

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN, PH.D., D.D.

ROOSEVELT PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK CITY

AUTHOR OF

'THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY'; 'CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN OUTLINE,' ETC.

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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1917

TO

MY FATHER

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

MAN has no deeper or wider interest than theology; none deeper, for however much he may change, he never loses his love of the many questions it covers; and none wider, for under whatever law he may live he never escapes from its spacious shade; nor does he ever find that it speaks to him in vain or uses a voice that fails to reach him. Once the present writer was talking with a friend who has equal fame as a statesman and a man of letters, and he said, "Every day I live, Politics, which are affairs of Man and Time, interest me less, while Theology, which is an affair of God and Eternity, interests me more." As with him, so with many, though the many feel that their interest is in theology and not in dogma. Dogma, they know, is but a series of resolutions framed by a council or parliament, which they do not respect any the more because the parliament was composed of ecclesiastically-minded persons; while the theology which so interests them is a discourse touching God, though the Being so named is the God man conceived as not only related to himself and his world but also as rising ever higher with the notions of the self and the world. Wise books, not in dogma but in theology, may therefore be described as the supreme need of our

day, for only such can save us from much fanaticism and secure us in the full possession of a sober and sane reason.

Theology is less a single science than an encyclopædia of sciences; indeed all the sciences which have to do with man have a better right to be called theological than anthropological, though the man it studies is not simply an individual but a race. Its way of viewing man is indeed characteristic; from this have come some of its brighter ideals and some of its darkest dreams. The ideals are all either ethical or social, and would make of earth a heaven, creating fraternity amongst men and forming all states into a goodly sisterhood; the dreams may be represented by doctrines which concern sin on the one side and the will of God on the other. But even this will cannot make sin luminous, for were it made radiant with grace, it would cease to be sin.

These books then,—which have all to be written by men who have lived in the full blaze of modern light,—though without having either their eyes burned out or their souls scorched into insensibility,—are intended to present God in relation to Man and Man in relation to God. It is intended that they begin, not in date of publication, but in order of thought, with a Theological Encyclopædia which shall show the circle of sciences co-ordinated under the term Theology, though all will be viewed as related to its central or main idea. This relation of God to human knowledge will then be looked at through mind as a communion of Deity with humanity, or God in fellowship with concrete man. On this basis the idea of Revela-

tion will be dealt with. Then, so far as history and philology are concerned, the two Sacred Books, which are here most significant, will be viewed as the scholar, who is also a divine, views them; in other words, the Old and New Testaments, regarded as human documents, will be criticised as a literature which expresses relations to both the present and the future; that is, to the men and races who made the books, as well as to the races and men the books made. The Bible will thus be studied in the Semitic family which gave it being, and also in the Indo-European families which gave to it the quality of the life to which they have attained. But Theology has to do with more than sacred literature; it has also to do with the thoughts and life its history occasioned. Therefore the Church has to be studied and presented as an institution which God founded and man administers. But it is possible to know this Church only through the thoughts it thinks, the doctrines it holds, the characters and the persons it forms, the people who are its saints and embody its ideals of sanctity, the acts it does, which are its sacraments, and the laws it follows and enforces which are its polity, and the young it educates and the nations it directs and controls. These are the points to be presented in the volumes which follow, which are all to be occupied with theology or the knowledge of God and His ways.

A. M. F.
"O"

PREFACE

THE ground covered in the following pages is so extensive that it has been necessary to pass lightly over many matters both important and interesting. The author has tried ever to keep in mind the main purpose of the book, which is to tell in as clear and simple language as possible the story of the rise, history, and the present state of the Christian hope of immortality. While no exhaustive bibliography has been attempted, it is hoped that enough has been given in the brief notes appended to the several chapters, as well as in the supplementary list at the close of the book, to point the way for further study to those who desire it. This has been the easier because within recent years a number of monographs have appeared which treat in a suggestive way of selected portions of the field.

Among the many to whom the thanks of the author are due for stimulus and suggestion, he desires to make special mention of his colleagues of the Faculty of the Union Theological Seminary, whose counsel in the fields in which they are specialists has been freely put at his disposal. To Professor James Everett Frame, Professor George A. Coe, and Dr. Julius A. Bewer especially, he is under obligation for helpful criticism.

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I

INTRODUCTORY

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

CHAPTER I

THE REASON FOR TELLING THE STORY

'If a man die, shall he live again?' It is an old question, but it has not yet lost its freshness. It has been asked many times, and answered many times, and the answers have often differed widely from one another. Sometimes it has been answered with a confident Yes; again with an equally confident No; often, and of late years increasingly, in tones which, whether the conclusions they voice be Yes or No, are alike lacking in confidence. Among the subjects upon which the minds of men are most unsettled in our day, this of the continued existence of the spirit after death is certainly one. Who can tell what shall follow the great change we call death? Who can promise us definite news from the undiscovered country? How can we even be sure that there is a country to be visited, or news which would be worth the hearing, could some messenger be found to bring us a trustworthy report?

In all this there is nothing novel. Doubt is no modern invention. In every age the note of question has made itself heard. It is as old as the famous saying with which Socrates concludes his *Apology*: 'The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways, I to die, and you to live. Which is better, God only knows.' It goes back further still to the day, hidden from us in the mists of a past which

seems ever to recede, when man first faced the twin mysteries, life and death, and asked himself in awe what they meant. It is this ancient wonder, ever recurring with each new generation, which gives point to Job's question to the Almighty: If a man die, shall he live again?

What is new is not the doubt, but the spirit of the doubters. There are many people in our day to whom uncertainty as to the possibility of answering Job's question no longer causes distress. Our lack of knowledge is regarded with complacency, or even welcomed with enthusiasm. It is a good thing, we are told, that we can know nothing definite of the life to come, for this helps us to concentrate our attention upon the life that now is. It safeguards us against unprofitable speculation. By robbing us of our fancied security in a beneficent future when all shall be made right, it keeps us from easy acquiescence in preventable wrongs. It reminds us that now is the appointed time for work and for play, for study and for service, for experience and for insight, for repentance and for consecration, for justice, for judgment and for mercy. What to-morrow may bring forth no one can foretell. Let us work, then, with our might, while our day lasts.

There is much that is noble in this mood. It accords well with the active energetic spirit of the age. Among those to whom it makes appeal are some of the finest and most self-sacrificing men and women whom we know, leaders in the battle against oppression and injustice, lovers of knowledge and of beauty, and of every sweet and true and humane thing. They are out of patience with an other-worldly religion which is ready to make terms with present evil at the cheap price of a salvation to be enjoyed by and by. They wish a salvation for to-day, and believe it is their part to be saviours. Such an example is salutary. It is a warning against sloth, a call to present duty.

And yet we cannot help wondering whether this attitude, appealing as it is, can permanently satisfy. There are phases of experience—and these not the least important—for which it makes no provision. I well recall an address delivered by a well-known social worker only a few months before his death, in which he voiced with rare eloquence his generous impatience with any remote Gospel which had no promise of present deliverance for the oppressed and unfortunate, to whose service his life was given. 'It is all very well to talk about the Kingdom coming by and by,' he said. 'But I am not willing to wait. I want my Kingdom to come in my own lifetime, here and now.' Before the year was over, the tireless brain was still, and the plans that seemed so near accomplishment were left for other hands to execute. Who of us has not felt this insistent longing for some visible, tangible fruit of our plans—all the more if, like the friend's in question, they were not for ourselves, but for others? And who of us has not felt the shock of disappointment that comes with the realisation that our ideal has outleaped the possibility of present accomplishment, and that the consummation, if at all, must be for other eyes and other years than ours? It is in such hours that the old question stirs again, and we wonder whether in truth this life ends all, and long for some assurance that the unanswered question has its answer, and that that answer is Yes. It is in such hours that the faith of those who have believed makes its appeal to some deep-seated need within us, which we had but half-suspected, and we wonder whether they have reasons sufficient to justify their faith, and whether those reasons may not be cogent for us.

It is, then, no mere academic question to which this book is devoted, but one which addresses itself to a permanent human need. I propose to tell the story of the most famous of all the answers that have been given to

Job's question. My theme is the Christian hope, as it has expressed itself in faith in personal immortality. I shall try to define the nature of the hope, to explain its origin and antecedents, to trace its history, and to show its relation to other forms of hope, which have preceded or accompanied it. I shall consider the different forms which it has assumed at different periods in its history; the reasons which in our day have led many to abandon it, the substitutes which have been proposed for it, and the new attempts which have been made to restate and defend it in the light of modern knowledge. Finally, I shall consider the grounds on which it rests, the need which it answers, and the reasons for believing that it is still a hope which it is possible for a sensible man to cherish as an assured conviction.

But, if the importance of the subject needs no defence, a word may not be out of place as to the reasons for writing another book about it. Of books on immortality there are enough and to spare, and every volume that treats of the Christian religion has its word to say upon the Christian hope. The writer who proposes to add another volume to the well-filled shelf may justly be required to show cause.

A word in defence might be said on general grounds. In themes which deal with the ultimate mysteries one cannot hope to have new ideas to impart. The value of a book consists largely in the personal equation—the extent to which the old question has made fresh appeal to some new experience. It is so with all the deeper truths of religion—the existence of God, the freedom and responsibility of man, the possibility and reality of prayer, the fruitfulness and beneficence of sacrifice. These are themes on which one needs no apology for writing, for they deal with questions of vital moment to everyday living. Every man who has put them to the test in his

own experience has a right to expect that his fellows will be interested to hear what he has to report. We do not think it strange that each year sees a new anatomy, or a new psychology. We ought not to be surprised that it should bring a new treatise on the being of God or the immortality of the soul.

But I have a more definite motive for taking up my pen than the desire to express my personal conviction on a theme of absorbing human interest. I believe that there is real need of a book in English which shall cover in brief compass and in simple, untechnical language the subjects which I have outlined. The changes which have been wrought in our estimate of Christianity by modern critical thought are nowhere more apparent than in connection with its eschatology. In place of a simple consistent belief, historical research shows us a complex history, in which many different strands cross and recross. Greece has contributed its quota, as well as Israel, and the different threads have been woven and rewoven into different patterns in the loom of the years. Where there are so many figures in the picture there is need of an interpreter. It is my hope that this book may serve as such a guide to those who are interested to follow the history of the Christian hope of immortality, as modern science enables us to retrace it. It is a story of wonderful fascination, for it reveals to us the working of some of the greatest intellects that have ever lived, upon one of the most enthralling problems that has ever challenged the intellect. But it shows us also—and this is even more important—the way in which the human spirit has triumphed over intellectual difficulty, and won peace and security through faith in a God whose love and power extend beyond the grave.

What is offered, then, in the pages that follow is a history of the Christian hope. And yet my purpose is not merely historical. I believe that faith in immortality, as Jesus has enabled men to conceive it, is an enlarging

and ennobling faith, without which life must necessarily be the poorer. If the story these pages tell shall enable any one who has lost this faith to recover it, or any one who holds it insecurely to grasp it more firmly, it will have accomplished its purpose.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

1. *The Place of Hope in Religion*

CHRISTIANITY has no monopoly of hope. Every great religion has been in a real sense a religion of hope. This is true even of Buddhism, which is often cited as the conclusive example of a religion of despair. If it seems so to us, trained through centuries of activity to regard life as the supreme good, that is only because we have not learned to put ourselves in the position of its devotees, and to realise the situation in which they found themselves when Gautama first preached to his disciples his gospel of deliverance through utter passivity and renunciation, even to the renunciation of life itself. Picture to yourself the prospect to which the Hindu looked forward in the sixth century before our era. He was bound forever to the wheel of life, which in its ceaseless revolution carried him from one existence to another in never-ending succession. What the new life was to be which would succeed the present he could not tell. It might be that of beast, or bird, or insect—the tiger in the jungle, the seagull on the wave, the fly buzzing over its carrion. He might awake as a noxious serpent, feared and hated, with a price set upon his head. He might live again as a beast of burden, the slave of some ignorant or brutal master. He might inhabit the body of some deformed or crippled specimen of humanity—the beggar nursing his sores by the wayside,

eking out a precarious livelihood from the charity of the passers-by. The one thing certain was that the life to come would be no finality. It would be but one in a chain of lives, each linked to its predecessor by an inexorable necessity, each the payment of debts incurred in some previous existence, the atonement of sins, the very memory of which had vanished from the mind. Ever weariness and pain, ever longing unsatisfied, desire unfulfilled, ever a certain fearful looking for a future big with possibilities of nameless terror:—such was life as it looked to the contemporaries of the Buddha, and to such his message of the possibility of a deliverance from life through the renunciation of desire opened the door of a great hope. If it were not for this fact, Gautama might have left a great name in the history of philosophy; but he would not have founded a religion, for religion everywhere and always lives by hope.

But if hope is a common feature of all religions, the nature of the hope fostered by particular religions differs widely. Sometimes it is confined to this life, and exhausts itself in the expectation of earthly prosperity. The worshipper hopes for success in the enterprises undertaken or planned, for victory over his enemies, for fertile fields and abundant harvests, for a fruitful wife and a quiverful of children, for health and strength and many days. It is the hope which Job's friends hold up to him as the natural lot of the righteous man, and which many of the Psalms celebrate with a lyric beauty which is still unsurpassed in its appeal:—

'Blessed is every one that feareth Jehovah, that walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.
Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of thine house:
Thy children like olive plants, round about thy table.

Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth
Jehovah.
Jehovah shall bless thee out of Zion:
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of
thy life.
Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children.' (Ps. cxxviii.)

Or again, the social aspects of the hope may be more prominent, as in the Messianic expectation of Israel. Here it is the nation rather than the individual which is the centre of interest, and the future to which the worshipper looks forward with pious confidence, is that of the renewed and re-established state. It is the peace of Jerusalem for which he prays, and the prosperity of her palaces in which he exults.

'And it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.' (Isa. ii. 2-3.)

Or, it may be that thought turns inward to the deeper needs of the spirit—the ceaseless conflict between good and evil which has its seat in the heart of man. The deliverance here desired is from this internecine conflict, and the hope is of an inner harmony brought about through the complete conformity of the will to the ideal. It is the hope of Paul in Romans, when, wearied by his long struggle for a legal righteousness which he despairs of attaining, he cries out in despair: 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' and finds his answer in the new law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which even here and now has made him free from the law of sin and of death (Rom. viii. 2)

Or still again, as in the special case which interests us here, the span of life may seem too narrow to hold all that the desire of man would crowd into it, and hope may reach out beyond the grave to claim for its own possession the limitless region which the passage of this ancient barrier opens to the imagination of man. Here, for the first time, room is found for the complete possession of all the things hoped for here, but unattained; room for the satisfaction of individual desires, so cruelly mocked by disease and famine, poverty and oppression, so untimely cut short by the summons that always comes too soon; room for the realisation of the social ideal, so continually postponed, so inadequately fulfilled, even when it is possible to speak of fulfilment at all; room, most of all, for victory in the moral struggle which here so often ends in defeat, or, at best, in a victory which is half defeat.

Finally, as in the Buddhist hope, already referred to, satisfaction may be sought in rest rather than in activity. What profit, one may ask, is there in life with its ceaseless alternations of satiety and want, its ever-recurring succession of desires and disappointments, of aspirations and failures? What reason is there for believing that the future, however extended, can furnish what the past has failed to provide? If hope is not to delude itself with empty dreams, some more radical solution must be sought. Not self-expression, but self-renunciation, is the path of peace. What is needed for the soul's salvation is not simply deliverance from individual desires, but from desire itself; not a longer term of life, but a different kind of life, if indeed one can call life at all that utter passivity and emptiness of self which is enjoyed in the dreamless sleep of Nirvana.

It is, then, a many-coloured picture which meets us when we retrace the history of man's hope, a picture as varied as the desires and longings of the painter, and that is only another way of saying, as various as the desires and

longings of man himself. Our special theme is but a chapter, although the most important, of the great book of hope at which man has been at work since the beginning of his life on earth.

It is my purpose in the pages that follow to tell the story of the Christian hope as it has expressed itself in faith in personal immortality. It is important, therefore, for us at the outset to understand just what this is, and wherein it differs from other forms of belief in a life after death.

2. *The Permanent Content of the Christian Hope*

By the Christian hope, for the purposes of the present discussion, we shall understand that form of hope for the future of the human spirit after death which owes its origin to the life, teaching, resurrection and continued influence of Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, and which has maintained itself in some form in the experience of His disciples ever since. It is a definite hope in that it relates itself to the life and teaching of a definite historic personality, and may be tested continually by reference to Him. But it is not rigid or inflexible. It has expressed itself in different forms from time to time, as it has come into contact with other forms of hope and been modified consciously or unconsciously by the influences which have given birth to them. So extensive has been this influence, so numerous these points of contact, that it is not always easy to tell where the common human inheritance ends and the distinctive contribution of Christianity begins. Like the tree that draws its nourishment from mother earth, transmuting into new forms and uses the moisture which it draws up from the mould of the decaying vegetation of the past, Christianity is rooted in the soil of humanity, and appropriates to its own purposes the ideas and customs which constitute its spiritual antecedents and environment. As the immanent

life of the tree gives vitality to the materials from which it draws its subsistence, so the genius of Christianity renews the life of these ancient beliefs and practices by making them partakers of its own immortal youth. The story of the Christian hope is thus the story of a constant assimilation and transmutation, a process begun nineteen centuries ago and still going on.

Nevertheless, there is a unity in the process, and it is important to recognise it. The Christian hope may change its form, but it is a change within limits. There is a Christian hope, and there is a hope which is not Christian, and it is possible to distinguish between them. In the present chapter we propose to point out the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian hope, in order that we may be able to see wherein it differs from other forms of hope which have made their appearance in human history.

In the first place, then, the Christian hope anticipates the survival of the individual personality after death in a form which makes possible the continuity of conscious moral life. It assumes the immortality of the soul—using the word soul in the familiar untechnical sense, to denote the self-conscious personal spirit, the subject of hope and fear and desire, of joy and grief, of love and hate, of worship and aspiration, of consecration and communion, in a word, of moral and spiritual experience in all its forms. The Christian hope is of the continued existence of the self-conscious ego, the I that wills and thinks and feels and sins and repents and is conscious through it all of capacities and aspirations as yet unrealised, too great indeed to be capable of realisation within the span of years open to our vision here.

There are many perplexing questions which suggest themselves as soon as we attempt to define the mysterious thing we call personality. What are its constituent elements? Are they two or three? Is man body and soul simply, or body, soul and spirit? Does personality

involve the continued union of body and spirit, or is it the attribute of spirit alone, capable of perpetuation without the material basis with which it is always associated in our personal experience? These are questions which will engage our attention as we go on, but they need not detain us here. The Christian hope is compatible with many different answers to these questions. It has coexisted with more than one psychology, and may prove able to make itself at home with still others, of which we have as yet no knowledge. But, whatever the view taken of the nature of self-conscious spirit and its relation to the physical organism in which it has its present home, it is the spirit which is the subject of the Christian hope. The immortality for which the Christian looks is personal immortality.

Again, the Christian hope is social. While it postulates individual immortality, its primary interest is not in the individual, but in society. The ultimate goal of faith is the coming of God's Kingdom, and the Kingdom is a community of individuals living together under the law of love in the spirit of brotherhood. As the Christian ideal for the individual in this life is not self-centred righteousness, but sympathetic fellowship, so the Christian interest in the continuance of the individual after death is that he may take his place and fulfil his function in the life of the brotherhood. The two sides are complementary. Each assumes the other; neither can exist alone. If ever a man felt the zest of life, it was the Apostle Paul. But living, to Paul, meant serving, here and hereafter. 'For what,' he asks his Thessalonian friends, 'is our hope or joy or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy' (1 Thess. ii. 19). A lonely immortality would be no object of hope to the Apostle. The heaven to which he looks forward includes his friends at Thessalonica and Corinth, as well as himself.

It is important to emphasise this aspect of the Christian hope because it is so often overlooked. The hope of immortality is contrasted as a matter of individual concern with the social gospel which has primarily to do with the conditions of life here. It is well to remember, therefore, that this contrast is foreign to primitive Christianity. The individual hope is an integral part of the social gospel, and both alike have reference to life here as well as to the life beyond the grave.

Here again, there are many perplexing questions which may be asked as to the nature and manner of the social consummation. When will the Kingdom come, and how and where? What will be the scene of the redeemed society? Here, or in some other world? What will be the relation of the new tasks and experiences to those already undertaken and undergone here? These questions have not always been answered in the same way. The difference between the answers given and the reasons for them will engage us by and by. Here we are concerned only with the common features of the Christian hope and, among these, the relation of the hope of individual perfection to the social purpose of the Kingdom is one.

In the third place, the Christian hope is a religious hope, that is to say, a hope which has its root in an underlying faith in God. It springs from confidence that man is a child of God, and that the Father who made man in His own image will not suffer the child of His Spirit to perish.

This, too, is of fundamental importance for the definition of our theme. The Christian hope is not primarily the outcome of philosophical speculation, but the creation of religious faith. The forms which it has assumed from time to time have been determined by contemporary theories of the nature of reality, the constitution of the world, and the relation of body and spirit. Its more enlightened holders have gladly welcomed the arguments which philosophy could bring to the support of their faith,

but the faith itself has had a deeper and a more abiding spring. It was the outgrowth of the soul's communion with God, and stands or falls with the Christian view of the relation between the divine Father and His human child.

We have spoken of the Christian view, and the word suggests a final characteristic of the hope which we are studying, which needs attention at the outset, namely, its close connection with the historic Jesus. It is that form of hope which owes its origin to the life, teaching and especially to the resurrection of Jesus, and which is distinguished from other forms of belief in immortality by the central place which it gives Him in its thought of the future.

There are two ways in which the Christian's attitude to Christ affects his belief in immortality. In the first place, it defines the nature of his hope; and, in the second place, it reinforces his confidence in it.

I say, it defines the nature of his hope. It is the hope of continued fellowship with and ultimate conformity to Jesus Christ. Before Jesus came, men had believed in a life after death, but not in the kind of life in which He taught them to believe. He set the standard for their thought of the future. Dying means to Paul going to be with Christ, which is far better (Phil. i. 23). It means to enjoy uninterrupted communion with the divine Saviour and Friend whose fellowship gives life here its highest charm. It means to be conformed to Him in character, one with Him in purpose, dominated by His spirit, member of a society in which He is everywhere recognised as Master. 'We shall be like him,' writes John, 'for we shall see him as he is' (1 John iii. 2). The goal of the Christian hope is Christlikeness.

And, as Jesus' character defines the nature of the Christian hope, so His personality is the ground of Christian confidence. By this it is not meant, as is often

asserted, that the Resurrection of Jesus is the only convincing argument for immortality. Men have believed in immortality who never knew of the resurrection. But it is meant that faith in the particular kind of immortality to which the Christian looks forward finds its strongest support in the life, character and continued influence of Jesus. It is literally true of Him, as the Apostle says, that He brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 10). In His own person He showed men what life at its best may be, and so made faith in its endless continuance easy and natural.

This is a point of the highest importance. Too often in the past the contrast between the present and the future has been unduly exaggerated. The life after death has been isolated from all relation to the present, and defined purely by contrast. The result is a certain hollowness and unreality in the picture which all the glowing imagery of Apocalypse, biblical or uninspired, has been powerless to warm into the semblance of a true life. How empty and shallow the heaven to which we have often been asked to look forward, a heaven of untroubled bliss, with nothing to achieve and nothing to anticipate, a heaven freed from suffering indeed, but free also from the struggle of which suffering is born, a heaven in which there is nothing to do but to enjoy, year after year, and æon after æon, through a monotonous eternity. It is not strange that men and women of high purpose and generous resolution should find little in such a future that is tempting.

We need to remember, then, that this isolation of the future from the present is not Christian. Our hope for the life to come is not different from our hope for the life here. There is but one life here and hereafter, and the change we call death is but opening the door from one room to another in the Father's house. All the elements which we have distinguished in our analysis of the idea of immortality are present in our ideal for the present life. Indeed,

it is the fact of their presence here which makes possible their projection upon the larger canvas. The ideal of individual perfection sets the task for our daily living. Every victory over self, every true impulse loyally followed, each day's growth in clearness of vision, definiteness of purpose, warmth of sympathy and assured self-control, is a foretaste of what we may expect by and by. The ideal of brotherly service, too, is an ideal for to-day. The Kingdom in its completeness may belong to the future, but it has its beginnings here and now. We pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and we are to work for the answering of our prayers. Communion with God, too, is a present experience. We believe that we shall have fellowship with God beyond the grave, because we have felt His creative Spirit at work in our lives here and now. Christlikeness, finally, the most distinctive, as it is the most difficult, element in the Christian hope, owes its place in our thought of the future to its anticipation here. Fellowship with our Master is one of the most familiar facts of the religious life. He sets us a model which we are to imitate in our own lives; His purpose gives definiteness to our social effort and reinforces our flagging zeal. His attainment sustains us in hours of disappointment, and makes it possible for us to believe, in spite of failures apparently the most irremediable, that His plan for us and for the world shall yet be fulfilled.

So much, then, in definition of our theme. It is no narrow or insignificant one. It is not a little section of Christianity which can be isolated from the rest, as one might close a room in a house, leaving all the rest unaffected. It is that without which all the rest would be marred and incomplete, a beginning without an end, a root without a blossom, a longing without its satisfaction, an ideal without its fulfilment.

II

HISTORICAL

CHAPTER III

EARLY CONCEPTIONS OF THE FUTURE LIFE

1. *Life in an Underworld without Moral Distinctions*

In order to begin our story at the beginning, we must go back many centuries, and put ourselves in the position of primitive man,[1] as he looked forward to the great change we call death. This is not easy to do, for many of the ideas which are most familiar to us had no place in his thinking, and it is only by an effort of the imagination that we can overcome the difficulty and think ourselves back into the conceptions which filled his mind, and in which his thought found itself at home.

Fortunately, there is no lack of evidence at our disposal. We have only to open our Homer or, for that matter, the Psalms, in order to have the essential features of the picture brought vividly before us. Let us take the former as our guide, since we shall be less likely to be confused by ideas read in as a result of later associations.[2]

For one thing, the contrast between matter and spirit, which is axiomatic for all our thinking, does not exist for Homer. Everything that is real is physical, that is to

[1] By primitive man, as the term is used here, I do not refer to the prehistoric man of the anthropologists, but only to man in that comparatively early stage of his development at which we find him when our assured knowledge of his history begins.

[2] On the Homeric idea of the future life cf. Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 116 *sq.*; Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 54 *sq.*, and references there given. On the development of thought in Homer cf. also Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, pp. 116-208, p. 232 *sq.*

say, it can be seen or heard or felt or touched or handled. There is a difference, of course, between soul and body, but it is not the difference between the material and the immaterial, but between the more or the less real. The soul is not less material than the body, but it is thinner, less substantial, less capable of exerting force, or resisting pressure, less capable, in a word, of doing the things in which a vigorous personality delights. Indeed, if one had to choose between body and soul for the seat of what we call personality, it is to the former rather than the latter that we must look. We read in the *Iliad* that the deadly wrath of the son of Peleus despatched to Hades many stalwart souls of heroes, but themselves (*i.e.* their bodies) he gave to be a prey to dogs.[1] The passage, though of comparatively late origin, perfectly reproduces the point of view of primitive man. The soul is not the man; it is only his shadow or image. The real man who lives and loves and desires and achieves and enjoys, is the moving, breathing presence which you can touch and embrace and, if need be, if you are strong enough, destroy. When Achilles left Hector's dead body on the plains of Troy, in a true sense he put an end to the man himself.

This does not mean that Hector's existence ceased at death. That would have been a fate to contemplate with resignation, but it was not the fate in store for the dying hero. The soul still survived to carry on its independent existence as best it could without the help and protection afforded by the body, and the accounts which have come down to us from our earliest records of the experiences of the bodiless soul are of almost unrelieved gloom.

In a famous passage in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* Homer describes the meeting of Odysseus with the dead Achilles. When that wily adventurer addresses to his former companion and fellow-warrior some word of pious consolation he is met by the hopeless answer: 'Speak not

[1] *Iliad*, I. 1 *sq.*, cf. XXIII., 106 *sq.*

consolingly of death to me, O great Odysseus; sooner would I be the slave of another in the house of a penniless wight who had no great livelihood, than king of all the dead' (*Od.*, XI. 488 *sq.*).

How could it be otherwise to a man who associated life with bodily activity? When Achilles lost his body he lost all that made life worth living to him. What remained was but a phantom of the living man. The bodiless soul is described in the *Odyssey* as a shadow, a vapour, a smoke which eludes contact. It lacks the qualities of resistance and of solidity which characterise the present body. When the soul of Patroclus met Achilles in a vision it was 'in all things like the man himself, in stature and fair eyes and voice, and the raiment on his body was the same,' but when Achilles 'reached forth his hands he grasped him not, for, like a vapour, the soul was gone beneath the earth with a faint shriek' (*Iliad*, XXIII. 66 *sq.*; 99 *sq.*).

Even more important for our present purpose than the unsubstantial character of the life after death is its complete lack of moral meaning. The values which give worth to life have disappeared. There is indeed a realm of the dead, Erebus, where the shades live together under their king, Hades,[1] but it is marked by barrenness and gloom. Its dwellings are 'dank and gruesome, the abomination of the very gods.' Its meadows are of asphodel, 'the dreariest of plants.'[2] Its groves shed their fruit before the season. In this dark and desolate region the souls of the departed flit to and fro like shades. 'Their very utterance is but the shadow or ghost of that which we call voice. It is a shrill attenuated shriek, a timorous inarticulate cry, compared by Homer, when it issues from many ghostly

[1] This conception of an underworld in which the dead dwell together is an advance upon an earlier view, in which the dead are conceived as haunting their graves, and enjoying certain magic powers which render them objects of worship. For our present purpose, however, the difference is negligible.

[2] Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 57.

throats at once, to the squeaking of a flock of bats when it is disturbed.'[1] The earthly differences of rank and task are indeed preserved; the king remains a king, the servant a servant, the hunter a hunter, the judge a judge, but the distinction is only in name. So far as the real values of life are concerned, all alike remain on the same level of monotony and emptiness. In the underworld there is nothing to be done or to be achieved, or to be enjoyed.[2]

Substitute Sheol for Erebus, and you might transfer Homer's words almost without change to the Old Testament. Here, too, we have the conception of the underworld as a land of darkness and of the shadow of death, of the spirits of the dead as shades leading an empty desolate existence, without hope and joy, of the obliteration of all the distinctions which separate men on earth, and, worst of all, of the severance of the soul from its God. 'What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit?' asks the Psalmist. 'Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?' (Ps. xxx. 9).

It is difficult to conceive a greater contrast than between this gloomy prospect and the glad anticipation with which the Christian contemplates the life to come. In the one case death is something to be feared; in the other, to be welcomed. In the former case, it is the object of dread; in the latter, of hope. How was the transition made? By what steps did the human spirit free itself from the pall of dread which darkened its thought of the future, and rise to a faith in the persistence of moral values after death?

There are three different paths which the human spirit has followed in its quest for a life worth living after death. One path leads back again to this pleasant world of earthly

[1] Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 58.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 60. The reference to the Elysian fields in *Od.* IV. 559 *sq.* is to be understood, not so much as a description of the state of the dead, as a promise of escape from death, granted to exceptionally favoured individuals. Tartarus, on the other hand, 'the prototype of the Miltonic hell,' . . . is 'appropriated to the generation of gods whom Zeus dethroned.' Cf. *Il.* VIII. 13 *sq.*; 478 *sq*

experience. It is the doctrine of the resurrection. A second finds in the underworld moral values no less real and no less enduring than those met with here. It is the conception of a judgment in the realm of the dead. The third ascends the unscaled peaks where the human spirit had its birth, and finds an unsuspected kinship between the soul and its Maker, which warrants belief in its endless existence. It is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. All three of these had been travelled centuries before Jesus was born, and the results to which they lead constitute the remoter preparation for the Christian hope. What these results were, and what was their relation to the more immediate preparation for the Christian hope in the religion of Israel, we have now to inquire.

The inquiry is not a simple one. All beginnings are obscure, and nowhere more so than in the story of man's thinking about the life after death. The records that have come down to us are comparatively late, and, in the form in which we now have them earlier ideas are overlaid with later speculation. Often independent lines of thought meet and mingle in the same religion, and we cannot certainly tell on which side the priority belongs. Fortunately, however, we are not interested in the details. The points which are of importance for our present purpose are sufficiently clear.

It is clear, in the first place, that the motive which led to the quest was a moral motive. All three of the different forms of thought which we have distinguished have this in common, that they give the life after death a moral meaning. It is a life of ethical readjustment, of retribution for deeds done in the body, with a double issue of good or evil, as the case may be. Where we can follow the history in detail, as we can, for example, in the religions of Persia and of Greece, we see that the impelling cause of the new faith was the belief in a moral government of the universe so comprehensive that its effects could not be limited to

this life, but must extend beyond the grave and affect the character and determine the destiny of the life there as well.

The form which the new hope assumed in detail was determined by the prevailing philosophy. Where reality was conceived in physical terms, as in the unreflective world in which Homer's heroes move, the life after death is pictured in terms of bodily activity, and hope looks forward either to a resurrection from the underworld, or to a material existence in the realm of the dead. Where the inner world of spirit has been discovered, and reality is defined as thought, or feeling, or will, the body is given a very different place in the picture of the future. It is no longer a help, but a hindrance. It is a prison-house from which man desires to escape to the free life of the spirit, a life transcending the bounds of time and space, eternal and unchanging as that of God Himself. All these different conceptions reappear in Christian thought, and have affected the statement of the Christian hope.

2. *Resurrection*

Of the three different ways of conceiving the life after death, the simplest in form, if not the earliest in time, is the resurrection. To understand it we must go back to the primitive conception of death, of which we have already spoken, and conceive the soul as living its aimless, hopeless existence because it lacks the physical organism through which alone it can achieve a life which is worthy of the name. If escape is to be had from such a future, body and spirit must be reunited, and this reunion is effected by the resurrection.

Examples of such a view meet us in the miracles of resurrection recorded in the Old Testament (*e.g.* the raising of the widow's son by Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 21; or of the Shunammite's son by Elijah, 2 Kings iv. 32-5). Here

the spirit returns to the same conditions which it left at death. But such instances are isolated and sporadic, and involve at most a postponement of death, not its defeat.

It is otherwise where the anticipation of resurrection becomes general. Here the reunion of soul and body is regarded as introducing man into a new and higher stage of life. It opens the door to joys which are impossible here under the limitations of suffering and sorrow to which this mortal life is heir. Yet the ideal remains essentially an ideal of sense. The resurrection is desired because it promises the gratification of those common human needs of food and shelter and sex which fill so large a place in the life of the earth. We have a relic of this early view in the prophecy attributed by Papias to Jesus concerning the remarkable fertility of the soil in the Messianic kingdom, when vine and wheat shall yield ten thousandfold 'and the other fruits, seeds and the grass shall produce in similar proportions, and all the animals, using these fruits which are products of the soil, shall become in their turn peaceable and harmonious, obedient to men in all subjection.' [1]

With deepening moral insight this early interest wanes. The contrast between this life and the next is emphasised. Resurrection is not simply a return to this present life even under the most favourable conditions. It is the entrance of the spirit upon a new environment with an organism fitted to new uses and new experiences. To Paul the body that is raised is not the body that was laid aside; it is a spiritual body, incorruptible and glorious.

It is in the latter form rather than the former that the doctrine of the resurrection meets us in the religions which have contributed most directly to the development of the Christian hope. Here the primitive view of death with which our story began has long been outgrown. The moral values which give meaning to life have made their presence felt in the underworld as well, and the reason why the

[1] The passage is cited in full on p. 113.

resurrection is desired is not so much that it makes possible a moral life after death for the individual as that it opens a way by which he may share the social consummation in which God's purpose for mankind on earth culminates. This is notably true in the religion of Persia, that one of the great religions in which the doctrine of the resurrection first meets us in a fully developed form.[1]

The Persian religion, as is well known, is an uncompromising ethical dualism. Two rival powers wage ceaseless warfare for the mastery of the world, Ormuzd (Ahura-Mazda), the ruler of the forces of righteousness, and Ahriman (Angro-Mainyush), the leader of the hosts of evil. The scene of their warfare is the soul of the individual man, and the test which determines the issue of the contest is his conduct during his life on earth. When a man dies, the reckoning of his life is taken. The spirits of good and evil contend for the possession of his soul. If the good prevail, he makes his way to Paradise, the dwelling-place of the good. If, on the other hand, the evil dominate, he sinks into the abyss which is tenanted by the spirits of evil. 'If the balance is equal and the judgment indeterminate, there is an intermediate state, in which he is reserved till the decision of the last day.'[2]

But this contest for the possession of the individual is only a stage in a greater contest whose scene is the universe itself. Society, as well as the individuals which compose it, is the scene of this momentous struggle. Often it seems as if the forces of evil would prevail, but in the end they are destined to defeat. There is to be a final conflict in which the hosts of good will triumph over the evil spirits. There will be a universal judgment, as a result of which all the wicked are to be cast into hell, and the good received into the fellowship of the god of light and into the happiness of his everlasting kingdom.

[1] On the eschatology of Persia, cf. Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 97 *sq.*, and literature cited in the Appendix.

[2] Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 107.

It is in connection with this belief in a final judgment that the doctrine of the resurrection makes its appearance in Persia. The great struggle which is to issue in the final triumph of the good is inaugurated by the advent of the Messiah, the way for whose coming has already been prepared by two prophets. At his coming the dead are to be raised up, after which will follow the general judgment, with its separation of the evil from the good. In the end all evil will be destroyed, hell itself brought to nought, and the earth renovated by a purifying fire.[1]

There is much in this doctrine which reminds us of the Christian eschatology: the Messianic faith, the preliminary prophets, the final contest, the general judgment and resurrection, all reappear in the Christian teaching concerning the future, as in that of Israel before it. Many scholars believe that we have to do with more than a parallel, and that through Israel the Persian religion has exercised a direct influence upon Christian eschatology. We shall recur to this opinion in a later chapter.[2]

3. *Judgment after Death*

In the doctrine of the resurrection the judgment to which the soul looks forward takes place on earth, and the rewards which follow it are enjoyed here. But there is another possibility open, which promises an even speedier satisfaction. Instead of being confined to earth and associated with the relation between soul and body, retribution may be placed in the underworld. The conception of the realm of the dead may be transformed and become richer, more varied. The interests and values which give meaning to life here may be carried over to the other world, and the judgment which the resurrection defers to the great assize at the end of the age may take

[1] For further details, cf. Salmond, *op. cit.* and references there given.
[2] Cf. p. 66.

place for each soul immediately after death. This is the view taken in the religion of Egypt.[1]

The central feature in the Egyptian thought of the future is the judgment to which each individual must submit upon his entry to the underworld. When the dead man reaches the Hall of the Double Truth, he is brought before Osiris, the divine judge. 'The goddess Maāt, the goddess of Justice, Truth or Law, is there holding a sceptre and the symbol of life. The scales are set, the man's heart in the one, the image of Maāt in the other. Horus watches the index, Thoth or Tehuti, the god of letters, takes the record. The standard of judgment is high. It covers all the great requirements of truth, purity, righteousness, charity, piety. Above the balance are the forty-two assessors, whose office is with the forty-two great forms of sin. The departed makes his confession, which takes the form of a negative statement denying his guilt in respect of these sins. His conscience, or moral nature, symbolised by the heart in the scale, speaks for him. If the judgment is favourable, he regains the use of hands, limbs and mouth. He receives back what he had lost by death. His soul, his Kâ, his shadow, are restored, and he begins a new life. If the judgment is unfavourable, he bears the penalty of loss and pain.' [2]

We must be on our guard against reading our own later ideas into these early records of man's thought about the after life. The conception of a judgment after death is compatible with a very crude psychology, and may be pictured in very material forms. This is notably true in the case in point. The care given by the Egyptians to the preservation of the dead, and the provision made for their physical wants in the underworld, show that we are still moving in the primitive world of thought which con-

[1] On the Egyptian eschatology, cf. Salmond, p. 46 *sq.*, and literature cited in the Appendix.
[2] Salmond, p. 60.

ceives spirit as a finer and more tenuous form of matter. The scene of man's existence has changed, but the conditions which make it effective are not essentially different from those which obtain on earth. The point that interests us here is that these conditions were present in the Egyptian thought of the future. He had freed himself from the idea that the life after death must necessarily be a gloomy and hopeless one, and had found room in the underworld for all the moral values that give meaning and worth to life here.[1]

The conception of a judgment immediately after death is not confined to the Egyptian religion. It meets us in Persia and in Greece as well. In each case it is the result of a deepening moral sense which is not satisfied to confine the operation of divine Providence to this life, but projects the moral issues raised here into the life beyond the grave.

It is clear that where such a faith is held the original motive for believing in the resurrection is no longer present. If life in the underworld admits of all the joys that give value to life here, why should one wish to return to earth at all? What place has the resurrection in a religion like that of Persia, which has already attained a moral conception of the life immediately after death?

To answer this question we must recall the connection in which the doctrine of the resurrection meets us. We

[1] There are many perplexing questions concerning the Egyptian religion, into which we need not enter here: as to the nature of the rewards and punishments which follow this judgment; as to the probation through which the righteous have to go before they finally reach the Elysian plains where they take up anew their old life; of the enlarged powers given to them, such as the privilege of assuming other forms; of the complex psychology of the Egyptian religion; of the nature of the Kâ, or spirit, in its relation to the body; of the ultimate fate of the wicked, the question whether it involves conscious existence in suffering, or issues finally in annihilation—all these are interesting questions, but they need not concern us here, for they have no direct bearing upon the story of the Christian hope, which is our theme. The one point to be emphasised is this, that in the religion of Egypt the underworld is conceived as a place of moral values with rewards and punishments, similar to those experienced by the righteous and the wicked during their life upon earth.

saw that it was an accompaniment of the great moral crisis which issues in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. In other words, the interest has been shifted from the individual to society, and the return of the former to earth is not for his own sake alone, but that he may share the triumph and contribute to the completeness of the final social consummation.[1]

Thus, while the interest in the doctrine of a judgment after death centres in the individual, the primary motive for the doctrine of the resurrection is social. Independent in origin, the two conceptions are complementary, and each contributes its share to the preparation for the Christian hope, which is at once individual and social.

But there is still a third step in the preparation to be considered, and that is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This introduces us into a circle of ideas so different from those which we have been considering hitherto that we shall do well to give it a chapter by itself.

[1] Here again we may distinguish two forms of this interest. In the earlier and simpler the redemptive interest predominates. The resurrection is necessary that the individual may share the joys of the Messianic salvation. In the later, the ethical interest becomes dominant. The wicked must be raised as well as the good, that the divine justice may be publicly vindicated. Cf. p. 67.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY IN INDIA AND GREECE

We have been dealing thus far with comparatively simple conceptions, conceptions which take life at its face value, as it presents itself to unreflective thought. Our picture of the future has been simply a projection on the larger canvas of figures made familiar through long association here. But our story would be incomplete if it did not take account of another factor. Not all thought of the future life conceives it as similar to life here. Sometimes it is defined by its contrasts rather than by its likenesses. Instead of introducing man into a material life of a happier and more desirable kind, death may be thought of as delivering him from bodily existence altogether, and introducing him into the life of pure spirit. This is the view taken in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

By the doctrine of immortality in the technical sense is meant the belief that the soul or spirit of man is an indestructible substance, more real, and therefore more enduring than the body in which it is temporarily housed; indeed, with the exception of the absolute Spirit, the most real and the most enduring thing in the entire universe.[1] This is a view which presupposes a comparatively advanced stage of mental development, since it involves the re-

[1] The word 'immortality' is, to be sure, often used in a less technical sense to include any view of the life after death which gives it moral value. I have myself used the word in this more general sense in the later chapters.

versal of man's earliest standard for judging reality. It is a philosophical rather than a religious conception, and it made its first appearance in the two great centres of philosophical speculation, India and Greece.

It is not my desire to enter needlessly into philosophical questions, but it will help us to understand several perplexing things about the history of the Christian hope if we remind ourselves for a moment what this change of estimate involves, and how it came about.

1. *Immortality in Greece*[1]

We all remember the story of Socrates, how he went about asking disagreeable questions, and making himself unpopular by showing those whom he could persuade to listen to him how little they knew of the real meaning of the words which were continually on their lips. Of all men who ever lived, Socrates was perhaps the least like a professional philosopher. Yet, it is with him that we associate one of the greatest revolutions in the history of thought. I mean the revolution which shifted the centre of interest from the outer world to the inner, from matter to spirit, from the cosmos to the self. Before Socrates men had endeavoured to interpret the inner life by that which was without. Socrates reversed the process, and taught them to interpret that which is without by that which is within. This fundamental change of emphasis is the most important step in the rise of the doctrine of immortality.

Let us recall for a moment the picture of the world as it appeared to the early Greek philosophers. Like all con-

[1] On the rise of the doctrine of immortality in Greece, cf. Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 133 *sq.*; Wheeler, *Dionysos and Immortality*, New York, 1899; Gaye, *The Platonic Conception of Immortality, and its connexion with the theory of Ideas*, London, 1904, and esp. Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, to whose illuminating discussion I desire here to express my indebtedness.

sistent thinkers, they were in search of a principle of unity, and they found it in some element in the material universe, air, fire, water, as the case might be, from whose changes were evolved all the other elements which together make up the complex and many-featured world in which we live. In other words, they thought of God, or the absolute Spirit, very much as primitive man thought of the soul. They pictured him as a quasi material substance, only more mobile and tenuous. Socrates, and Plato after him, conceived of God as spirit; that is to say, they looked within for the qualities with which to describe the supreme existence, instead of without, where they had been sought hitherto. They found these qualities in thought, purpose, meaning, affection, in a word, in the ideal elements of the life of the spirit. As Plato conceives him God is the idea, the supreme reason who contemplates all things, but who abides himself unchanged.

How, then, shall we account for the world of actual experience, the world of change and uncertainty, of sorrow and disappointment? Whence shall we derive the physical universe with its birth and death, its growth and its decay, its possibilities unrealised, its promise unfulfilled? What place has matter in the life of spirit, and what is its relation to the supreme spirit we call God?

Here we find the most original part of the Platonic philosophy. Plato answers that you cannot account for these things by spirit alone. The efforts of the early philosophers to derive all things from a single principle he pronounces a failure. The world which we see and touch, in which we are born and grow up, in which we live and die, is a compound of two rival principles, matter and spirit, each inconsistent with the other. It is a world formed by God out of a pre-existing chaos, and preserving in its corruption and decay the evidences of the imperfect material out of which it was made. And what is true of the world as a whole is true of each individual existence

in it. It, too, is a compound of two rival and incongruous elements, material and spiritual, and the strife of which it is conscious within itself is the reproduction within the microcosm of the more ancient struggle which has been going on throughout the entire universe ever since the dawn of time.

Here we have the background against which to place the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The soul, or, as Plato would say, the reason (*Nous*),[1] is the divine element in man, a spark of the eternal reason which is the creative principle in the universe. As such it is as imperishable as God Himself. The body is only the tenement in which it is housed, a prison from which it longs to be delivered. As reason, man shares the divine nature, and is able to contemplate the ideas of the good, the beautiful and the true, which are the objects of the divine thought, but as body he is a part of the material universe, a prey to corruption and death. This unequal combination explains the strange incongruities of human experience, the struggle of the higher and the lower in man, the law of the spirit making war against the law of the flesh, the one aspiring upward, the other dragging downward, as two unruly steeds struggling for the mastery tax the strength of the most skilful charioteer.

Two corollaries follow from this conception of the soul. In the first place, it is pre-existent.[2] Like the divine Reason to which it is akin, man's reason is eternal, and eternity knows as little of a beginning as of an end. Before the physical universe began, the soul had its independent existence as pure spirit, and only afterwards was united with the body through the strange marriage we call birth.[3] The little segment of experience which constitutes the story of a human life is only a chapter in a longer

[1] On Plato's terminology, cf. Adam, *op. cit.* p. 381 *sq.*

[2] This, to be sure, as Dr. Adam well remarks, applies only to 'the rational part of the soul which is in the strictest sense divine,' p. 377.

[3] Cf. the striking account in the *Timaeus*, quoted by Dr. Adam, p. 376 *sq.*

history reaching backward as well as forward, the major part of which is hidden from our ken. One thing only we can know, that the story is one, and that which we see and feel here is bound by inexorable law to all that has gone before, and all that shall follow after.

The second corollary is even less familiar to our Western thought. It is that of transmigration. If the soul's existence is independent of the body, and incarnation is an episode in its never-ending life, there is no reason why we should think of it as taking place only once. On the contrary, it may be repeated many times and in many forms. The soul may pass successively from one incarnation to another, and the same individual who now lives as hero or sage may have visited the earth before as beast or bird. This was the conviction of many serious thinkers both in India and in Greece. 'Ere now,' Empedocles is reported to have said, 'I, too, have been a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird and a scaly fish in the sea.'[1] Pythagoras cherished a similar belief, if we may trust the satire of Xenophanes:—

> 'Once he was moved to pity,—so men say,—
> Seeing a dog rough handled by the way,
> Forbear thy hand; housed in yon cur doth lie
> A friend of mine; I knew him by his cry.'[2]

Socrates' defence of the doctrine in the *Phaedo* is familiar to every reader of Plato.[3]

It is evident that where such is the view of the relation of body and soul, hope must take a very different form from that which has met us in the simpler philosophies which we have hitherto been studying. In the life to which Plato looks forward, the body has no place. It is a curse rather than a blessing, a shackle rather than an aid. Not activity, but thought, not struggle but contemplation,

[1] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 101.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[3] Jowett's tr., I. p. 459 *sq.*

not passion but peace, characterise the immortal life for which he longs. For God, the supreme object of desire, is pure beauty, pure goodness, pure reason, and in union with Him in the untroubled world in which He dwells the soul fulfils its true destiny.[1]

Such, then, in briefest statement, is the doctrine of immortality as it is conceived by the great thinker who, outside of the prophets and psalmists of Israel, has exercised the most powerful influence upon Christian thought. It is an infinite distance which separates his view from that of Homer, and the story of the steps by which the Greek mind passed from one to the other is one of the most fascinating in the history of human thought. We have not space to linger over it here, but it may be worth while to recall the chief factors which had a part in bringing about the result.

The most important of these we have already mentioned, namely, the philosophical revolution which shifted the centre of interest from the outer world to the inner. I have spoken of Socrates as the first of the Greek thinkers to find in the spirit of man the key to the understanding of the universe, but the statement is only half true. No great change in human thinking comes unheralded. For many years before the great Athenian troubled men with his insistent questions, his predecessors had been feeling their way toward a spiritual conception of reality. Xenophanes had spoken of 'one God greatest among gods and men, resembling mortals neither in form nor in thought, evermore abiding in the same place, moving not at all,

[1] In what has been said above I have made no attempt to distinguish the different strands in Plato's thought, and the different interests which determine it. For such a detailed study the reader may be referred to Gaye, *The Platonic Conception of Immortality*, especially chap. xii., in which he discusses the question whether we note any waning of interest in the subject in the later dialogues. His general conclusion is that, in spite of a shifting of metaphysical interest, immortality retains its ethical value for Plato, as a motive reinforcing the influences which make for self-discipline.

without toil, ruling all things by the purpose of his mind.'[1] Heraclitus had conceived of a divine essence which he described now as fire, but again as Logos, or Word, the unity in which all opposites are reconciled.[2] Anaxagoras had explained creation as due to the activity of reason, 'the subtlest and purest of all things.'[3] Protagoras had uttered his famous saying, 'Man is the measure of all things.'[4] By these and similar speculations the way had been prepared for the last great step taken by Socrates and his greater disciple Plato.

The second factor was the deepening moral insight which in Greece, as in Egypt and in Persia before it, had transformed the underworld of Homer from the scene of an empty and unreal existence into a place of moral retribution. Just when the change took place, and what were the factors which brought it about, we cannot fully say, but in Pindar it is already complete. The underworld of Pindar is the scene of a divine judgment for the deeds wrought on earth, and in it the righteous and the wicked are rewarded or punished according to their desert. 'The sins committed in the kingdom of Zeus (*i.e.* the earth) are judged by one beneath the ground, hateful Necessity enforcing the doom he speaks. But ever through nights and ever through days the same, the good receive an unlaborious life beneath the sunshine. They vex not with might of hand the earth or the waters of the sea for food that satisfieth not, but among the honoured gods, such as had pleasure in the keeping of oaths enjoy a tearless life but the others have pain too fearful to behold.'[5]

More familiar is the picture of the future life in Plato's famous dialogue. When Socrates discourses with his disciples on the last night before he is to drink the hemlock, he lets his imagination play about the fate in store for him

[1] *Fragments* 23, 26, 25, cited by Adam, *op. cit.* p. 201.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[3] *Frag.* 12, cited by Adam, p. 256.
[4] *Frag.*, 1, Adam, p. 274.
[5] *Ol.* II. 57 *sq.*, cited by Adam, *op. cit.* p. 132.

in the underworld, and indulges the hope that he may there hold fellowship with the mighty dead—Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer. What greater happiness could be his 'than to continue in the other world the service to which God had called him here, examining the heroes of old, Agamemnon, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, to see which of them was wise and which foolish, though wise in his own esteem—a missionary, as it were, to the spirits in prison?'[1]

What interests us in this picture is the continuity of experience. The tasks and interests which give meaning to life here are continued there. The moral values persist. Life is all of a piece; its two scenes part of a single drama, chapters in a single story.

This consciousness of the unity of life was powerfully reinforced by the work of the great dramatists. Like the prophets of Israel, with whom it is so natural to compare them, Aeschylus and his successors wrought into the consciousness of the Greek people the conviction of a moral government of the universe. While they contribute little directly to the development of the doctrine of immortality, they purify and spiritualise the conception of God which is its necessary presupposition. Aeschylus breaks with the naïve polytheism of the Homeric Pantheon. Zeus to him is the creator and lord of all, who governs the universe in wisdom and justice:—

'Unto what other one
Of all the gods should I for justice turn?
From him our race did spring;
Creator he and King,
Ancient of days and wisdom he, and might.
As bark before the wind,
So, wafted by his mind,
Moves every counsel, each device aright.

[1] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 346.

Beneath no stronger hand
Holds he a weak command,
No throne doth he abase him to adore;
Swift as a word, his deed
Acts out what stands decreed
In counsels of his heart, for evermore.'[1]

Sophocles contrasts the traditions of men with

'Unwritten laws eternal in the heavens,
Not of to-day or yesterday are these,
But live from everlasting, and from whence
They sprang none knoweth.'[2]

His cheerful optimism invades the other world. Antigone hopes that when she reaches Hades

'My father's love will greet me, yea and thine,
My mother,—and thy welcome, brother dear.
Since when ye died I with mine own hands laid
And dressed your limbs and poured upon your graves
Libations.'[3]

With Euripides a more sceptical spirit makes itself felt, but he, too, has his part in the development through his remorseless criticism of the fables which ascribe immorality to the gods:

'It cannot be that Zeus' bride Leto bare
Such folly. Nay, I hold unworthy credence
The banquet given of Tantalus to the gods,
As though the gods could savour a child's flesh!
Even so, this folk, themselves man-murderers,
Charge on the goddess their own sin, I ween;
For I believe that none of gods is vile.'[4]

But neither philosophical speculation as to the nature of reality, nor ethical assurance as to persistence of moral

[1] *Suppliants*, 598 *sq.*, Morshead's tr., cited by Adam, p. 143.
[2] *Antigone*, 450 *sq.*, Whitelaw's tr., cited by Adam, p. 167.
[3] *Ibid.*, 897 *sq.*, p. 173.
[4] *Iphigeneia*, 385 *sq.*, Way's tr., cited by Adam, p. 297.

values is sufficient alone to account for the form which the doctrine of immortality assumed in Greece. Both in Plato and in Pindar before him,[1] we find evidence of a third factor which needs to be taken into the account. This is the strange religious movement associated with the name of Orpheus, which made its appearance in Greece some time during the sixth century.[2] Just how and when it arose we do not know, but it is certain that from the sixth century on little groups of persons were found in the different cities of Greece who had united for the purpose of certain religious practices, based upon a common faith in immortality. They believed that the soul was divine in origin and spiritual in nature; that it had been imprisoned in the body as a penalty for sins committed in a former existence, and that deliverance was possible only through purification and abstinence. They believed that until such deliverance had been attained, the sinner must continue to pass from one incarnation to another until he had fulfilled to the uttermost the measure of his alloted penalty. Empedocles gives us an account of the vicissitudes of the wanderer during his age-long journeying as he is 'born into all kinds of mortal forms, passing from one laborious path of life to another. For the mighty air changes him into the sea, and the sea spits him forth upon the dry land, and earth casts him into the light of the blazing sun, and the sun hurls him into the eddies of air. One takes him from the other, and he is hated of them all.'[3] From such a dreadful fate the Orphic communities promised deliverance to their devotees through the religious observances into which they initiated them, and the ascetic rule of life which they laid upon them.

[1] Cf. the conclusion of the passage already cited (p. 41) from the second *Olympian*, Adam, p. 132; cf. also p. 133 *sq.*

[2] Cf. Adam, p. 92 *sq.*; Wheeler, *Dionysos and Immortality*.

[3] Fr. 115, 6 *sq.*, cited by Adam, p. 100.

Here first in the Western world we meet with transmigration as a religious doctrine, a living faith affecting conduct and determining hope. We shall see presently how the same faith reappears in an even more intense and far-reaching form in the great religions of the East.

These, then, are the three factors which prepare the way for the doctrine of immortality in the form in which it has passed over from Greece to Christianity: the philosophical belief that the nature of ultimate reality is spiritual, the ethical conviction that the world is governed by moral law, and that the principles of this government extend beyond the grave, and the religious faith that this world is a place of retribution for sins committed in a previous existence, and that the way of deliverance is to be sought through purification and abstinence.

2. *Immortality in India*

I have gone so fully into the story of the Greek hope because of its intimate connection with Christianity. But we must not forget that long before Plato had conceived the idea of immortality it had been a familiar thought to the sages of India. A word as to the older form of the doctrine will not be out of place.[1]

In the Indian religions the doctrine of immortality is inextricably interwoven with that of transmigration. This present existence is but one of an infinite series reaching backward and forward in endless sequence as far as the imagination can reach. Each living creature that inhabits the universe down to the tiniest insect that lives its fleeting life upon the lily pad in some quiet pool is an incarnate soul doing penalty for the sins committed in some previous life. Pythagoras's counsel to his friend is

[1] On the Indian eschatology, cf. Salmond, *op. cit.* 25 *sq.*, and the literature cited in the Appendix.

taken very seriously by the Hindu, but it is not limited to the dog, but extends to every form of animal life. The fly you crush against the pane in some moment of petulance may, for aught you know, have been a mighty monarch, and you yourself, in turn, may some day buzz out a similar existence at the mercy of any heavy hand which may fall upon you. Where such is the fate in store for high and low alike, the only mood worthy of a rational man is an infinite pity.

Theoretically, there is nothing in the doctrine of transmigration which need necessarily make it an object of dread. One might conceivably awake to a happier existence as well as to one more miserable. Retribution may take the form of reward for the righteous as well as of doom for the wicked, and the hope of such reward might well prove a consolation to the just man under the trials and injustices of his present life. This is indeed the form which the development of the idea took in Greece. As it meets us in Pindar, the doctrine of transmigration seems to have been a doctrine of hope as well as of despair. It was the stair-way up which the soul passed on its journey toward heaven.[1]

Very different was the course of things in India. Here, as we have seen, the doctrine was one of almost unrelieved gloom. While there were heavens to which the righteous might attain by merit,[2] they were beyond the range of the common man's expectation. For him there remained only the dreary round of existence, whether in the form of man or of beast or of insect, each required for the atonement of past sin, and each, in turn, preparing the way through new sin for the life of new atonement. There was not even the satisfaction of understanding why the doom took the form it did, for while the individual survived to fulfil his justly appointed destiny, there was no continuity of individual self-consciousness, and hence no personal

[1] Cf. Adam, *op. cit.* p. 132.

[2] Salmond, p. 35.

immortality in the Christian sense. Thus, for the ordinary man the doctrine of transmigration proved no advance over the earlier view of the life after death. It, too, was a doom to be feared rather than a blessing to be desired.

To understand this contrast we must take account of another aspect of the Hindu philosophy, namely, its low estimate of personality. To the Greek, with his love of life and his enjoyment of beauty, as to the Egyptian and the Persian before him, individuality was a good thing. The particular form which life might assume for any individual might be evil, but the way of escape was through a new environment, not through the loss of personality. To the Hindu, on the other hand, with his pantheistic world view, self-consciousness itself was a form of imperfection. The real unity of existence lay below thought, even below feeling. It had its root in the substance of things, the eternal structure of the universe which assigns to each its place and determines for each its destiny. What we know and see and feel is mere appearance. It is illusion, vanity, the changing manifestation of a reality which abides ever unchanged. The philosopher perceives this and seeks to escape from the illusions of the senses by withdrawing from the material world and fixing his thought upon the Absolute. His ideal is one of absorption rather than of continued individuality. He would become one with the infinite, as the stream loses itself in the sea, or the breath becomes absorbed in the surrounding air. It is the mystic ideal of *Gelassenheit*, of complete self-abnegation and passivity.

With this conception before us we can easily understand the appeal of Buddhism to the Hindu mind. Gautama carried the criticism of Hinduism one step farther. He added to the illusions from which the wise man seeks to be delivered the idea of the Absolute itself. He asks the reason for the misery of individual life, and he finds it in desire. Why can man never be content? Because he

is always in search of something, and each longing satisfied only opens the way to a new longing even more insatiable. What, then, is the remedy? Clearly the suppression of all desire, even the desire for happiness, even the desire for goodness, nay, more, even the desire for union with the Absolute. From the misery of existence there is but one certain way of escape, the way of utter renunciation, even to the renunciation of life itself.

It is difficult to imagine a greater contrast than between this gospel and that of Jesus. Face to face with the misery of existence the two follow opposite paths. Buddhism accepts the estimate placed upon life by the contemporary religion at its face value, nay, it accentuates its misery and hopelessness, and offers as its solution of the world's woe escape into the dreamless sleep of Nirvana. Christianity finds the remedy for the disappointments of life in life more abundant, for unsatisfied desires in the awakening of desires still more insatiable. Instead of cessation of existence, it promises endless continuance, since only so can scope be found for communion with that God, in whose service—which is at the same time the service of his fellows—the spirit of man finds rest and peace.

This is not due to any lack of sympathy with the mood to which the Buddhist gospel makes appeal. Christians have experienced to the full the misery and incompleteness of life. There are sentences in Augustine, and even in the New Testament, which Gautama himself might have uttered. Again and again the mystic note has made itself heard in Christian history. Again and again the contemplative ideal has been exalted above the ideal of action, and union with God been described as involving the complete suppression of individual desire. There have been Christian pantheists as well as Indian, but Christianity as a religion has never been permanently satisfied with the pantheistic view of the world. It is

interesting, even at this early stage of our inquiry, to ask the reason why.

The answer is a very simple one. It is because the ideal of Christianity, while in the fullest sense an individual ideal, is not simply individual. The person whom Jesus promises to save is not an isolated personality, but a member of a community, and the failure which from the point of view of the individual alone would be fatal is seen to be a step in the complex social process, whose end is the Kingdom of God.

Here is the great significance of the doctrine of the Resurrection as an element in the preparation for the Christian hope, for the central interest in the Resurrection faith, as we have already seen, is social. The religions of India concern themselves purely with the fortunes of the individual soul. Age after age, æon after æon, the wheel of life works out its ceaseless revolutions, bringing us in the end to the same place where we began. There can be no progress, for progress is an affair of relations, and relations are determined for the individual by contact with other individuals in society. There must be real issues to be worked out, causes to be served, common ideals and purposes to be realised, if we are to talk of progress in the true ethical sense. But, for such progress as this the religions of India make no place.

It is otherwise with the Resurrection faith. Here society rather than the individual holds the centre of interest. There is a great contest going on between the forces of good and evil, 'one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves.' The importance of resurrection is not simply that the individual may fulfil his own destiny in a more fortunate state on earth, but that he may have part in the new social order we call the Kingdom of God.

It is evident that in such an ideal as this the conscious life of thought, purpose and emotion, which constitutes

what we call personality, has a very different significance from that assigned to it in the doctrine of transmigration. There it is an incident in a larger whole, to be succeeded by others equally transitory. Here it is the very heart and centre of the process, necessary to give it moral value, since without self-consciousness those social contacts and relationships through which the destiny of the individual is to be realised could not take place.

CHAPTER V

THE PREPARATION IN ISRAEL FOR THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

THE conceptions of the future life which we have thus far passed in review have all had their origin independently of Christianity. They represent, as we have said, the remoter preparation for the Christian hope. Brief as has been our survey, it is a picture of extraordinary complexity which has unrolled itself before us. The varying estimate of life, from a cheerful optimism to a settled pessimism; the difference in relative importance assigned to the body and the soul in the life that follows death; the shifting of interest from society to the individual, and from the individual back to society again, as it meets us in the doctrine of the resurrection; the deepening moral sense, with its emphasis upon righteousness as the thing of supreme importance, and its conviction that the laws of justice are of universal validity, extending their influence beyond the grave; the birth of philosophical speculation, with its increasing distrust of the report of sense and its new definition of reality: these are some of the factors which have met us in our survey, and which we must keep in mind, as we address ourselves more directly to our immediate theme. We are to consider in this chapter the direct preparation for the Christian hope, and this, as is well known, we find in the religion of Israel.[1]

At first sight the preparation seems less full and clear

[1] On the eschatology of Israel, cf. the literature cited in the Appendix.

than we should expect. Coming to the Old Testament with our Christian inheritance, much of its teaching concerning the future life seems surprisingly hesitant and meagre. Indeed, we are so accustomed to treat the Old Testament as a Christian book, reading into it ideas made familiar to us by later association, that it is difficult for us to take its most direct statements at their face value and realise that we are dealing with the dawn of revelation instead of its full and glorious noon. The difficulty of thinking ourselves back into the methods of thought of a bygone civilisation, already noted in our study of the religions of Persia and of Greece, reappears here in accentuated form. Here, too, to quote the words of Dr. Salmond, one of the most cautious and sane of recent writers on our subject, we have to transport ourselves 'into a world of ideas on the present and on the future, on good and on evil, on what makes life and what makes death, which are singularly unlike all that the Western and modern mind is accustomed to. We have to place ourselves outside a vast environment of intellectual habit, the late result of the thoughts of men as for many centuries they have been directed to the problems of the future. We have to unlearn those philosophical conceptions and distinctions which rule our modern thinking. Above all, we have to retire behind those specifically Christian views which have become a second nature to us.' In a word, 'we have to divest ourselves for the time of our entire mental equipment, and transfer ourselves back to the position of thinkers and believers on whose horizon such things have not risen.' [1]

Yet, difficult as is the readjustment required, the effort will prove well worth while. We shall find in the end, as in the case of every honest search for truth, that we have gained more than we have lost. If the preparation for the Christian hope in the religion of Israel is slower than

[1] Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 162.

we had supposed, it is none the less definite and sure. As we follow the course of the development we shall see how, starting on the same basis as other primitive peoples, the religious thinkers of Israel won their way step by step to an assured faith in God's universal moral government, in the continuance of His love and power in the realm of the dead, in the extension and ultimate triumph of His Kingdom on earth, and in a universal resurrection and final judgment ushering in the rewards and punishments of the last day. It is a story which does not end with the limits of the Old Testament, but includes among its sources the later non-canonical literature of Israel, and extends in unbroken course from the earliest records of which we have knowledge to the year when Jesus first made His public proclamation of the approaching Kingdom of God.[1]

1. *The Early Conception of Sheol*

To begin at the beginning, we must go back to the time when the future life was still an object of dread rather than of desire. When we make our first acquaintance with Israel's hope it is confined entirely to the present life. The righteous may look forward to long life, prosperity, riches, earthly success and happiness of every kind. The years of his life may extend to threescore years and ten, or even to fourscore, but when at last the summons comes to die it rings down the curtain upon all that makes life worth living. In the grave, whither man goes at death, there is neither knowledge nor activity, neither happiness nor usefulness, neither morality nor religion. The earth God has given to the children of men, but those who go down into the silence of the grave cannot praise Him

[1] The importance of the contribution of the non-canonical books is obscured in Dr. Salmond's otherwise excellent discussion. He passes immediately from 'The Old Testament Preparation' to 'Christ's Teaching,'—a method which does inadequate justice to the significance of the intervening development.

(Ps. cxv. 16, 17). 'In death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who shall give thee thanks?' (Ps. vi. 5).[1]

We must not think of the life after death as one of active misery. The translation of the Hebrew word Sheol by our English hell in the authorised version gives a wholly misleading impression. Sheol is not a place of suffering so much as of emptiness and monotony. It is a land of darkness and of chaos. It is a land of desolation and dust. Its inhabitants are described as Rephaim,[2] that is, shades, a feeble, ineffective folk. In a famous passage in Isaiah the prophet pictures the commotion in Sheol when the King of Babylon joins the Kings of the shades. 'Sheol from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming. It stirreth up the shades for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth. It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol and the noise of thy viols. The worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning? How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations. . . . They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee. They shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness and overthrew the cities thereof?' It is

[1] In Israel, as among other nations, we can distinguish between an earlier and a later conception of the state of the dead. At first, the departed spirits were thought of as haunting the grave where the body was laid, and dependent for their happiness or misery upon the ministrations of the living. Only later, with the beginning of reflective thought, does the conception of Sheol as an underworld arise. In Israel this was due, doubtless, to contact with the cosmogony of Babylonia, an influence which we can trace in other phases of Hebrew thought (*e.g.* the creation and flood stories). In Babylonia we meet the conception of an underworld (Aralû) in highly developed form. It seems not unlikely, therefore, that to this source the Hebrews owed their idea of Sheol.

Cf. Paton, *The Hebrew Idea of the Future Life*, in the *Biblical World*, March 1910. On the eschatology of Babylonia and Assyria, cf. Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 76 *sq.*

[2] *E.g.* Job xxvi. 5; Isa. xiv. 9; xxvi. 14. Cf. Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 204.

the weakness which is in store for the once mighty king when he reaches Sheol which gives point to the prophet's taunt, 'Art thou become like one of us,' that is to say, as impotent as we are? (Isa. xiv. 9-17).

There are indeed moods when even this empty shadow of life seems preferable to the acute misery of man's existence here. Job in his wretchedness longs for death, or better still, wishes that he had never been born. 'Wherefore,' he asks, 'is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul: that long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; that rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave' (Job iii. 20-22). What cares the sufferer for its monotony and emptiness? These are the blessings which he most desires. To be where 'the wicked cease from troubling,' and 'the weary are at rest'; where 'the prisoners are at ease together, and they hear not the voice of the task-master' (*Ibid.*, vv. 17, 18). But such cases are the rare exception. To most Israelites life seems too good a thing to be parted with without regret, and hope seeks its satisfaction within the compass of this present life.

There is something wonderfully pathetic in the eagerness with which the most earnest spirits in Israel cling to life. The note struck by Achilles in his answer to Odysseus meets us again and again in the Psalms. The pious man prays to Jehovah for many days, for he knows that it is only thus that he can retain his hold upon the things he values. 'What man is he that feareth Jehovah? Him shall he instruct in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease, and his seed shall inherit the land' (Ps. xxv. 12, 13). 'My son,' says the wise man, 'forget not my law, but let thy heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace shall they add unto thee' (Prov. iii. 1, 2). Wisdom holds in her left hand 'riches and honour,' but in her right hand 'length of days,' wherewith to enjoy them (Prov. iii. 16). Long

life is the blessing promised to those who honour their parents in the fifth commandment, and prolongation of days the reward held out to the Israelites in Deuteronomy as an inducement for keeping the law (vi. 2). We must do our work with our might while life lasts, for 'there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol,' whither we are going (Eccles. ix. 10).

2. *The Messianic Hope*

But what of those to whom this good gift is denied, those who have been cut off in their prime by war or pestilence, or, living to old age, have found their days, like Job's, full of labour and sorrow? What compensation has religion to offer to such as these within the compass of the present life?

The answer given by Israel's prophets is a social one. It is the Messianic hope. What the span of individual life cannot contain, the life of the nation makes room for. The individual may perish, the nation lives on, and on the wider theatre of the national life scope is found for the realisation of the hope for which the individual life provides no satisfaction.

I use the word, Messianic hope, in this connection in the widest sense, to denote that expectation of a time of future prosperity for Israel which runs like a golden thread through the sombre pages of the national history.[1] It is the expression of Israel's confidence that in spite of apparent disappointment and failure the national destiny is ultimately to be fulfilled, and the divine deliverance so eagerly anticipated and so often deferred is finally to be accomplished. It is a hope which assumes many forms. Sometimes Israel alone stands in the centre of the canvas,

[1] The term is often used in a narrower sense to denote that form of hope which connects the promised deliverance with a personal Saviour, a prince of the lineage of David.

and again, all nations share the blessings of the Messianic era. Sometimes the great crisis which introduces the new age is represented as a battle in which the armies of the Lord defeat the hosts of wickedness. At other times it is a judgment in which Jehovah sits upon His throne and apportions reward or punishment to each according to his desert. Sometimes it is Jehovah Himself who comes in person to deliver His people and re-establish His Kingdom, and again, it is a human deliverer who is to be His representative in the great salvation. Now it is a single individual for whose coming the prophets look; now it is a dynasty, a line of kings of the Davidic lineage who shall rule successively in Jerusalem. And still again the prophet or the priest takes the place of the king as mediator of the divine salvation. But whatever the variations in detail, these three elements are always present in the thought of the future. It is to be a time of national prosperity, of national righteousness, and of religion pure and undefiled.

In the first place, it is to be a time of prosperity. Israel is to be delivered from the enemies who had oppressed her. In the later prophets this involves the restoration of the national independence. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, and the exiles who have been carried into captivity are to return to their native land (Jer. iii. 14-18; xxxi. 6-14; Ps. cvii. 1-3). Nature will smile on them, and they will be blessed with fertile fields and abundant harvests. Each man will dwell under his own vine and fig-tree with his children and his children's children about him (Micah iv. 4; Isa. lxv. 19-22; Jer. xxxi. 5).

In the second place, it is to be a time of righteousness. No one can hope to share the blessings of the future salvation who is not clean of hand and pure of heart. Jerusalem will be the centre of justice and of judgment. Brotherly kindness and sympathy will be the law of human life. The broken hearts are to be bound up, the captives freed,

and the prison doors thrown open (Isa. iv. 3, 4; lxi. 1-3).

Above all, it is to be a time of religion pure and undefiled. Idolatry is to cease, the false gods will be forsaken, the communion between the nation and Jehovah, which has been interrupted by sin, will be re-established.

'And it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. . . . For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.' (Isa. ii. 1-3; cf. Ps. li. 18, 19.)

In order to understand the place held by the Messianic hope in the spiritual life of Israel, we must forget the individualism in which we have been trained and put ourselves in the position of men to whom the moral unit is not the individual but the nation. In every age there have been men who have so identified themselves with their country that their own interests have been forgotten and their very personality merged in the larger whole. But, in the case of the religious teachers of Israel, this attitude is not exceptional but characteristic. They are not primarily concerned with their own fortunes, but with the destiny of their people. It is not the individual Israelite, but Israel as a nation who is the child, the wife, the son of Jehovah. That the apostasy of the nation should involve all the individuals in it, that the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children, of the sovereign upon the people, of the evil on the good, seemed to the pious Israelite as natural as it was inevitable. And conversely, the assurance of the ultimate victory of Israel was the sufficient consolation for the misfortunes which he might suffer in the present. Apart from the institutions of the national religion the life of the best of men was maimed and ineffective. When the exiles in Babylon

are asked by their captors for a song, they have none to give.

> 'How shall we sing Jehovah's song,
> In a strange land?
> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
> Let my right hand forget her skill.
> Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
> If I remember thee not;
> If I prefer not Jerusalem
> Above my chief joy.' (Ps. cxxxvii. 4-5.)

But let the edict of restoration go forth, and in a moment all is changed.

> 'When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion,
> We were like unto them that dream.
> Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
> And our tongue with singing:
> Then said they among the nations,
> Jehovah hath done great things for them.
> Jehovah hath done great things for us;
> Whereof we are glad.' (Ps. cxxvi. 1-3.)

3. *Intimations of Immortality*

It is obvious that where such a viewpoint is dominant the hope of individual immortality must occupy a subordinate place. Since the sorrows and trials which plague individuals were connected directly or indirectly with the national sin, their remedy was to be found in the national restoration, and this the pious in Israel confidently expected in the near future and in an enduring form. Before faith in immortality can arise this expectation must be shaken. The bond which unites the individual Israelite to the nation must be weakened, and the belief arise that each human soul has a value of its own for God quite apart from the social group of which it is a part. This we find actually taking place in Israel in connection with the

experiences of the exile, and it is this new conviction, voicing itself in the utterance of great thinkers like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which is the distinctive contribution of the religion of Israel to the doctrine of immortality.

The first to give clear utterance to this new note in Israel is Jeremiah. The failure of the outward support on which he had been accustomed to rely forced him to seek some new and deeper foundation for his faith, and he found it where the devout in every age have found it, in the communion of the soul with God. His own experience as he wrestled with God taught him a new and deeper conception of the divine purpose. He learned to think of God not simply as the deliverer from outward danger, but from inward corruption, as the creator of the clean heart, the one who dwells with the man of humble and contrite spirit, the patient, long-suffering friend whose love abides unchanged in spite of man's infirmity, and who will in the end prevail.

Under the influence of this new insight we see the gradual transformation of the Messianic hope. It becomes less outward, more inward. It deals less with institutions, and more with persons. Isaiah's teaching concerning the 'Remnant' (Isa. x. 20-23) is reasserted by Jeremiah in more emphatic form. Not Israel as such, but the pious in Israel constitute the true object of Jehovah's care and the subject of his redemptive purpose. They are the good figs which he separates from the bad figs which are destined for destruction (Jer. xxiv. 1-10). They are the good seed from which the house of Israel and of Judah is to be renewed (Jer. xxxi. 27). Upon their hearts, as upon a living tablet, the new covenant of Jehovah is to be inscribed (vv. 33, 34). They shall no longer be involved in the consequences of their neighbour's sins. 'In those days they shall no more say, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge, but every

one shall die for his own iniquity. Every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge' (vv. 29, 30).

Ezekiel is even more outspoken in his individualism. Taking up Jeremiah's words, he enlarges upon them. 'What mean ye,' he asks, 'that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sinneth, it shall die, but if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right . . . he shall surely live' (Ezek. xviii. 1-9.)

This new and profounder conception of the worth of the individual reaches its finest expression in the great prophet of the exile, to whom we owe the last part of the Book of Isaiah. Here Jeremiah's distinction between the true and the false Israel is combined with the new teaching that the mark of the true Servant of Jehovah is sacrificial service (Isa. xlix. 6, 7; liii. 4-6). Whatever our interpretation of Isaiah liii., the great passage which has given Christian thought its clearest picture of the suffering Christ, whether we interpret the servant as an individual or as the personification of all the faithful sufferers of Israel, it is clear that we are dealing with convictions born of the profoundest personal experience, and only to be understood in the light of the new ideals of salvation whose rise we have been considering. The passion of redeeming love, in which Hosea had discovered the characteristic mark of God (Hos. i., ii.), is here extended to man, and so the communion between the two is established on the firmest possible basis.

Such a conception could not fail to issue in the belief in individual immortality. Had this not been the case, Israel must have been the exception to what we find

taking place everywhere else under similar conditions. The wonder is not that with such a conception of God and of salvation the belief should have made its appearance, but that it should have been so long deferred.[1]

Just when the new hope first makes its appearance, it is not easy to say with certainty. Critical questions still remain, upon which scholars are not yet agreed. Yet, in general, the main lines of the development are clear. At first, the hope appears in sporadic utterances as an assertion of individual faith, leaving the old conception of Sheol still unchanged. Devout men here and there dared to believe that God would yet deliver them from its power, or continue even in Sheol the communion with Himself which they had enjoyed here. Later, this individual expectation unites with the broader stream of the national hope and, in the doctrine of the resurrection, we have the affirmation that the pious souls who have passed away before the future consummation, shall not be deprived of its joys. Finally, under the rising tide of faith Sheol itself is transformed. It becomes the scene of ethical values, and a place where the pious may still enjoy uninterrupted communion with God.[2]

[1] A possible reason for the later appearance of the hope of immortality in Israel was the opposition of the prophets to ancestor worship, traces of which many scholars find in early portions of the Old Testament. Against this practice the prophets resolutely set their face, and the effect of their attitude was to intensify still further the Hebrew view of the hopelessness and ineffectiveness of the life after death. Cf. Paton, *op. cit.* p. 253 *sq.*

[2] Anticipations of the doctrine of the resurrection have been found in the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, recorded in 1 Kings xvii. 8-24, and 2 Kings iv. 8-37. But the cases are not parallel. We have to do here with a simple prolongation of life, to be succeeded in due time by the death from which none can escape. Much closer is the parallel in the case of Enoch (Gen. v. 24), and Elijah (2 Kings ii. 1-11), who at death are caught up to heaven with God. But here again we have to do with exceptional cases, from which no general doctrine can be drawn. Similar cases of exceptions to the common lot of mankind meet us in religions like that of Babylonia, which have never developed any general doctrine of a moral life after death. Cf. Paton, *Biblical World*, March 1910, p. 166.

The most notable expression of the first form of hope is Job's famous saying in xix. 25-27 :—

'I know that my Redeemer (*i.e.* vindicator, champion) liveth,
And at last he shall stand up upon the earth,
And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed.
Then without my flesh shall I see God,
Whom I, even I, shall see on my side.
And mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger.'[1]

To appreciate the significance of this great utterance, one of the noblest expressions in literature of the triumph of faith over obstacles apparently insuperable, we must recall the context. Job does not question the prevailing estimate of Sheol. As we have already seen, there are times in which he even welcomes its darkness and ineffectiveness as a refuge from the acute torments of his life here. But the mood is a transient one. His trust in God is too strong to make the thought of final separation tolerable. Hope wrestles with despair in his thought of the future. Now hope has the ascendant, as in chapter xiv. 13-15 :—

'Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol,
That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! . . .

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[1] Interpreters differ in their rendering of the passage, some, as in the Revised Version quoted above, interpreting the word—וּמִבְּשָׂרִי 'apart from my flesh,' that is to say, in disembodied form; others, 'from my flesh,' or in other words, re-embodied. An advocate of the later view is Professor Paton, in his *Hebrew Idea of the Future Life* (*op. cit.* May, p. 345). Following the revised text of Duhm, he renders the passage as follows:—

'But I know that my avenger liveth,
And one who shall survive after I am dust;
And that another shall arise as my witness,
And that he shall set up his mark.
From my flesh shall I see God,
Whom I shall see for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold, and no stranger.'

This difference of opinion does not affect the main point involved, which is that the sufferer expects to see God for himself in the life after death

All the days of my warfare would I wait,
Till my release should come.
Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee:
Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thy hands.'

But the hope fades almost as soon as it is born.

'"But now," he goes on, "thou numberest my steps:
Dost thou not watch over my sin? . . .
My transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And thou fastenest up mine iniquity.
And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought,
And the rock is removed out of its place;
The waters wear the stones;
The overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth:
So thou destroyest the hope of man.
Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth."'
(vv. 16-20.)

All the more significant is it that the last word should be one of triumph, and that the sufferer, conscious of his integrity, should dare to affirm his ultimate vindication by God in the life after death.

A similar confidence finds expression in several of the psalms.[1] Thus in Psalm xlix. the Psalmist pictures the death of the wicked who descend as a flock to Sheol, where death is appointed for their shepherd. But as for him, he is confident that God will deliver him from such a fate.

'God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol,
For he shall receive me.' (v. 15.)

So, in Psalm lxxiii., the writer, perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked, finds consolation in the thought that their triumph is temporary, whereas he himself is

'Continually with thee:
Thou hast holden my right hand.

[1] If the Servant be regarded as an individual, we must add Isa. liii. 10-12, to the passages cited from the Psalms, as giving us our first intimations of immortality in the Old Testament.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.

. . . . .

My flesh and my heart faileth:
But my God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.' (vv. 23, 24, 26.)

Even clearer is the teaching of Psalms xvi. and xvii.

'I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Thereforth my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol:
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.
Thou wilt show me the path of life:
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'
(xvi. 8-11.)

'As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness:
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy form.' (xvii. 15.)[1]

4. *The Doctrine of the Resurrection*

The passages which we have thus far been considering are the utterances of strong men in their isolation. The hope they express is purely individual, but in a nation with so highly developed a social consciousness as Israel, this isolation could not permanently continue. Sooner or later the individual hope and the national hope must come together, and this is what takes place in the doctrine of the resurrection.

When and where this doctrine first makes its appearance

[1] Some recent commentators interpret these Psalms as expressions of the national consciousness; others, adopting the individual interpretation, understand the deliverance referred to as taking place in the present life. Neither view seems to the present writer to do full justice to the context. It seems simpler and more natural to understand these passages, like the parallel passage in Job, as intimations of immortality springing up in the souls of men of vital faith and preparing the way for the fuller and more systematic expressions of the hope which meet us in the later history.

in the religion of Israel is still in dispute. The first unmistakable evidence of the new faith is found in Isaiah xxvi. 19, 20, where the prophet reassures his troubled readers as follows :—

'Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.'

The best critics regard this passage as part of an apocalypse of the late Persian period. In view of the closeness of contact between Israel and Persia at the time, it is natural to attribute the appearance of the doctrine of the resurrection in Israel to Persian influence,[1] but while it is quite likely that such may have been the case, it is not necessary to assume this in order to account for the facts. The premises of the resurrection faith, as we have seen, had long been laid by Jeremiah and Ezekiel in their conception of God and of His relation to the individual. All that was needed was that some thinker should arise, clear-sighted and bold enough, to draw the conclusion. Such a thinker we have in the unknown writer of Isaiah xxvi. To him it was not sufficient that Israel as a nation should rise from the dead, as Ezekiel had taught before him;[2] the individual Israelites, too, who had passed away in the cruel days of oppression God must bring again, that they may share the joy of the final triumph.

In the apocalypse of Isaiah the resurrection is confined to the righteous. The oppressors of Israel, like the wicked whom death shepherds, descend to Sheol, and for them there is no deliverance (v. 14). A different view appears in the well-known passage in Daniel xii. 2, 3 :—

'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall

[1] Cf. on this subject Stave: *Einfluss des Parsismus auf das Judentum*, 1898; Cheyne: *Possible Zoroastrian Influence on the Religion of Israel*; *Expository Times*, vol. ii. pp. 202, 224, 249 *sq.*

[2] Cf. xxxvii., the vision of the valley of dry bones.

awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.'

Here, as in the later judgment scene in Matthew xxv., the wicked rise as well as the righteous, and the purpose of the return of the dead to earth is not simply salvation, but punishment. It is true that not all the dead are raised, but only many of them, the conspicuous saints and the conspicuous sinners.[1] But the inclusion of sinners with saints proves that a new interest has emerged. The close connection between resurrection and judgment which plays so conspicuous a *rôle* in Christian theology has begun.

The doctrine of the resurrection is a familiar one in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era.[2] Sometimes, as in Enoch 91 : 10, only the righteous are raised, and again as in Enoch 51, Ezra and Baruch, the wicked rise for judgment. Now, as in Second Maccabees,[3] the resurrection restores the dead to conditions similar to those which prevail here; and again, as in Enoch 62 : 11-16,[4] the contrast between the condition before and after resurrection is emphasised.[5] Now there is but one resurrection, introducing those who share it at once into the joys of the final state, and again there are two, a preliminary resurrection introducing the Millennium, or reign

[1] Possibly, as Paton suggests (*op. cit.* p. 347) 'the righteous priests and scribes who suffered martyrdom in the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes.'

[2] It appears in various portions of the Book of Enoch (*e.g.* 51 : 1; 62 : 11-16; 91 : 10; 92 : 3), in the Psalms of Solomon (3 : 16), in Second Maccabees (7 : 9, 14, 23), as well as in such later books as Fourth Ezra (7 : 32), and the Apocalypse of Baruch (30 : 1-5; 50; 51 : 1-6).

[3] At the resurrection the martyr expects to receive back the tongue and hands of which he has been deprived here (7 : 11).

[4] 'And these shall be your garments, garments of life, saith the Lord of spirits, and your garments will not grow old and your glory will not pass away before the Lord of spirits' (v. 16).

[5] In Baruch 50; 51 : 1, the dead rise in the same form for judgment, but after judgment their aspect changes, that of the righteous for the better, that of the wicked for the worse.

of the saints on earth, to be succeeded at its close by the final resurrection which is to usher in the heavenly kingdom which shall know no end.[1]

The reader who tries to thread his way without a guide through this tangled maze speedily finds himself involved in almost inextricable difficulties. Some of these are critical and literary. Many of the books he studies (as for example Enoch) are composite in origin, and critics are not agreed as to the relation and date of the several parts. Some portions of the literature (like Baruch and Fourth Ezra) are post-Christian, and it is a disputed question how far they show traces of Christian influence. Moreover, there is the ever-present difficulty caused by the prevalence of an unfamiliar literary form. In the apocalypses, Jewish as Christian, earthly events and experiences are pictured in symbolic form, and it is not always easy to tell where fact ends and symbol begins. For all these reasons interpretation is peculiarly difficult, and the student whose interest, like our own, is in following the main line of religious development, must be ever on his guard lest he be led into some by-way of speculation apart from the high-road of progress.

From the confused variety of opinion which the apocalypses present, one fact of outstanding importance emerges, and that is the growing transcendence of Israel's hope. By this we mean the extent to which, in Jewish thought of the future, interest is shifted from the familiar and the near to the strange and the remote ; or, as we should put it in more theological language, from the earthly to the heavenly.

The importance of this change can hardly be exaggerated. At first, the hope of the nation, as well as of the individual, is confined to this earth. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, the supremacy of Israel among the nations is to

[1] So in Enoch 91 : 3-10, and more clearly in Baruch 40 : 3, and Fourth Ezra 7 : 28, 29.

be re-established, and the nature of the blessings to be enjoyed in the Messianic age differs from those which may be enjoyed here only in their completeness and in their permanence. But, before the beginning of the Christian era this early expectation had been weakened. Earth had become too narrow a stage for the consummation which is expected. There is to be a sudden crisis, a great catastrophe. Messiah will come in the clouds of heaven, the conditions of life will be transformed, a new environment created, and the consummation impossible of attainment by the methods of God's present working will be brought about by a stupendous miracle. This shifting of interest from the familiar to the strange, from earth to heaven, is what we mean by the transcendence of the later Messianic hope.[1]

The causes of this change we can only conjecture. They were partly theoretical, and partly practical. For one thing, the repeated postponements of the earthly hope led men to despair of the possibility of its ever being realised. For one brief moment indeed, when Cyrus allowed the exiles to return, it seemed as if the longed-for day had come, and the Messianic era was at hand. And again in the period of heroic struggle under the Maccabees the old hope revived, but the successes gained were altogether incommensurate with the anticipations cherished, and when the Roman domination succeeded those which had gone before, the more thoughtful among the Jews realised the hopelessness of any conquest to be won by natural means.

[1] This does not mean, of course, that the older view was crowded out altogether. On the contrary, it lived on side by side with the new, and meets us in strange and often unexpected connections. An instance in point is the doctrine of the Millennium, already referred to. Here we have the combination of the earlier conception of the resurrection as a restoration of the dead to the conditions which had existed before their departure with the later transcendent form of the doctrine. There are two resurrections, the first of the righteous saints who enjoy on earth the blessings of the Messianic salvation; the second, of all men good and evil at the final judgment which ushers in the world to come. Cf. my article 'Millennium'; Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, and references there given.

Moreover, the rise of philosophical speculation had led to the conception of another kind of reality than that with which we are familiar here. Earthly existences were held to have their heavenly counterparts, waiting to be revealed at the proper time to those for whom God had designed them. The earthly tabernacle was the copy of a heavenly tabernacle; the temple at Jerusalem, of a heavenly temple; Jerusalem itself of a heavenly city prepared by God to be the home of the saints (cf. Heb. xi. 10; Rev. xxi. 2). So Messiah was no longer an earthly prince, but a superhuman being hidden with God from the beginning until the appointed time, when at the end of the age he should descend to earth to undertake his supernatural salvation.[1]

5. *The Moralisation of Sheol*

Side by side with this change went another scarcely less important. I refer to the transformation of Sheol from a place of colourless and ineffective existence into a scene of active moral life. This took place at least as early as 100 B.C., possibly much earlier. Thus in the first portion of the Book of Enoch, which some critics date as early as 170 B.C., Sheol is described as containing four divisions, two for the righteous, and two for the wicked. The first contains the souls of the righteous who in this life have met with persecution and have suffered a violent death. These cry continually to God for ven-

[1] The most striking example of this transcendent eschatology is found in the Similitudes of Enoch (37-70). Here we read of a Son of Man 'with whom dwelleth righteousness and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of spirits hath chosen him, and his light before the Lord of spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness forever' (46: 3). Before the sun and the stars were created 'his name was named before the Lord of spirits' (48: 3). 'In him dwells the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of him who gives knowledge . . . and he will judge the secret things, and no one will be able to utter a lying word before him' (49: 3, 4). The Lord of spirits will place him 'on the throne of glory, and he will judge all the works of the holy in the heaven and weigh their deeds in the balance' (61: 8). By the word of his mouth he shall slay all the sinners, and all the unrighteous shall be destroyed before his face (62: 2). With his appearing all evil will pass away, and from henceforth there will be nothing that is corruptible (69: 29).

geance on those who have wronged them. The second contains the souls of the righteous who have not shared these painful experiences. Their lot is pleasant. In their dwelling-place 'there is a spring of water, and light above it.' The third is for the sinners who have died, and been 'buried in the earth without incurring judgment in their lifetime. Here their souls are placed apart in this great pain unto the day of judgment and punishment and torture of the revilers forever.' The last is for the souls of the wicked who have received their punishment in this life. These 'complete in their crimes,' shall remain there forever, and will not be raised at the last day.[1]

Even more striking is the teaching of the Similitudes of Enoch (chapters 37-70) which were probably written shortly before the Christian era. Here we read of a garden of life, in which the elect dwell (61 : 12). When Enoch is translated and carried to Paradise, he finds it already tenanted by the 'first fathers and the righteous who from the beginning dwell in that place' (70 : 4). One is reminded of Jesus' words to the dying thief, 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' To the author of the Similitudes, as to his greater successor, death has lost its terrors. It is a door that opens into the Father's house.

What a contrast these passages present to the Sheol to which Job looks forward, a place of gloom and monotony, to be desired in spite of its emptiness for its one good gift of rest! Here we have consciousness and activity, varieties of experience and distinctions of moral value. It is not necessary to wait until the soul escapes from Sheol in order to commune with God, for His power extends even to the grave. The sentence to be pronounced upon the wicked is anticipated in the underworld,[2] and after death as before the righteous are still with Him.

[1] Enoch 22. Charles's edition, pp. 94, 95.

[2] As to the nature of the punishment of the wicked after death, cf. Volz: *Jüdische Eschatologie*, p. 282 *sq.* It is partly negative,—separation from God; partly positive,—suffering in body and in spirit. The figures of the worm, the fire, and darkness are frequently used. In duration it is endless.

Thus in various ways we see the older eschatology of Israel being modified and transformed. Attention has shifted from the outer to the inner, from the body to the soul, from earth to heaven. The great transition which we have already witnessed in Greece is repeating itself in Israel.

What part did Greece play in this transition? Interesting as this question is, long as it has engrossed the attention of scholars, it is not possible to answer it with certainty. In some later Jewish books, notably the Wisdom of Solomon, Greek influence is unmistakable Here immortality is taught in the Platonic form. Birth is represented as a fall from a higher existence (7 : 3) the body is a clog upon the immortal spirit (9 : 15), and death a blessed relief from imprisonment. Similar is the teaching of Fourth Maccabees, as well as of the famous thinker Philo of Alexandria, the great mediator between the thought of Israel and Greece.[1] These writings, passing over from Israel to the youthful Christian Church, played an important part in the later history, and helped to bring about that contact between Greek and Christian thought which we shall have occasion to study in the chapters that follow. But the story belongs to a later date than the period which we are now considering, and we need not linger over it now.

The question as to Greek influence on the earlier development is more difficult. Some scholars make Greece responsible for the change in the conception of Sheol, to which reference has already been made.[2] But the case is by no means clear. Here, as in the parallel case of the resurrection, the change may well have been due to inherent causes. Other peoples besides the Greeks have come to believe in the possibility of a moral life

[1] According to Josephus (*Wars*, ii. 8; *Antiquities*, xviii. 5) similar views were held by the Essenes.

[2] *E.g.* Paton, *op. cit.* p. 340

in the underworld. Why not Israel? The premises, as we have seen, were already laid. If God could bring the soul back from Sheol, why could He not reach His faithful servants even there? What limit could faith set either to His power or to His love? The God of Jeremiah and of the second Isaiah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Father who had made man in His own image for communion with Himself, could not permanently be banished from any part of His creation.

It is this unshakable conviction of God's love and power which constitutes the direct preparation for the Christian hope. Each of the many forms assumed by Israel's thought of the future during the long history which we have been retracing has its parallel in other religions. The earlier and the later view of Sheol, the simpler and the more transcendent conception of the resurrection, the union of the earthly with the heavenly hope, as we have it in the Millennium of the apocalypses, the doctrine of immortality as it meets us in the Wisdom literature, all these we have learned to know through our earlier study. But the deep conviction that God had made man in His own image for communion with Himself, that salvation was a moral process involving the transformation of character in individuals as well as the alteration of social conditions, and above all, the central place given self-sacrificing love as the characteristic attribute of God and the bond of union between Him and His creature, this was Israel's own, and it was upon this foundation that Jesus built His own teaching concerning the future.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONTRIBUTION OF JESUS TO THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

BRIEF as has been our survey of man's thought of the future life before Christ, it has made two things clear; first, the wide extent of the preparation for the Christian hope, and secondly, the great variety of forms which it has assumed. We have seen that long before Jesus came man's thought had been busy with the mystery of death, and his consciousness of the persistence of moral values had asserted itself. In Egypt, in India, in Persia, in Greece, as well as in Israel, we have seen the primitive conception of the life of the spirit after death replaced by other and more hopeful convictions. We have traced the different paths by which this new faith was won, and the different forms which it had assumed. We have seen that many of the essential constituents in the later Christian hope had their anticipations in pre-Christian thought. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the conviction that the continuity of the moral life persists without break, and the expectation of a final social consummation in which living and dead alike share, all of these have their parallels in other religions. This being the case, the question is a fair one, what Christ has added which was not there before? What right have we to speak of a Christian hope as distinct from a Jewish or a Greek, or indeed, from a hope which is merely human?

The answer can be given very simply. Christianity has added to man's belief in the life after death two things:

first, a new evidence of the fact; secondly, a new definition of its nature. The new evidence for the fact is the personality of Jesus; the new definition of its nature is Christlikeness. Each of these is the direct contribution of Jesus to man's thought of the future. Both together constitute the distinctive content of the Christian hope.

It is always so in connection with Christianity. When we touch Jesus we reach that which is distinctive. Nowhere is this more apparent than in connection with the subject of our present interest.

There are three ways in which Jesus contributes to the Christian hope, first, by His teaching; secondly, by His character, and thirdly, by His Resurrection. In the present chapter we shall consider the first two of these, leaving the third for the chapter that follows.[1]

1. *The Method of Jesus*

The first way in which Jesus contributes to faith in immortality is by His teaching. He reaffirms in unequivocal manner the great truths which constitute Israel's distinctive preparation for the Christian hope: the truth of the fatherhood of God, of His purpose to establish a righteous society among men, of His compassionate care for the individual, of the persistence of the human spirit after death under conditions which make possible the continuance of a self-conscious moral life, of the union of living and dead in the all-embracing commonwealth of the Kingdom of God.

This He does, to be sure, by indirection. That is always

[1] On the eschatological teaching of Jesus, cf. the literature cited in the Appendix. It is manifestly impossible within the limits of the present essay for the author to enter into a detailed discussion of the critical questions connected with the Gospels. It is sufficient for him to say that he accepts in general the two-source theory, *i.e.* the theory that the earliest sources of our synoptic gospels were a gospel like our present Mark, and a document (commonly known as Q) containing the bulk of the discourses not given in Mark which are common to Luke and to Matthew.

Jesus' way. Nothing is more surprising, had not familiarity dulled our sense of the fact, than the incidental way in which Jesus enunciates His most revolutionary principles. He assumes rather than asserts. He takes for granted that the message which He brings is one with which His hearers are already well acquainted. It is so with His teaching about God. Jesus does not tell men that God is their Father, as though He were uttering something new and startling. He speaks of Fatherhood as a well-known fact, from which He proceeds to draw the consequences. 'Ye shall be perfect,' He says, 'as your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48). Our Father is compassionate. We ought therefore to forgive our enemies (Matt. vi. 14, 15; cf. Luke vi. 35, 36). He is righteous. We must be uncompromising in our resistance to evil (Matt. vi. 1-4; cf. v. 16-20). He makes His sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends His rain on the just and the unjust. We ought to imitate His impartial benevolence (Matt. v. 45, 46).

Even more important than His enunciation of principles are the illustrations by which He drives them home. The trouble with the men to whom Jesus spoke was not so much that they denied His teaching as that they did not realise what it meant. Jesus could adopt without change the Scribe's reading of the great commandment, but their ways parted when the Master extended neighbourhood to include the Samaritan (Luke x. 25-37). That God was forgiving every Jew was ready to admit, but when Jesus interpreted God's forgiveness in terms of the fatted calf for the returning prodigal, rigorous moralists felt that He was going too far. Revolution is always a matter of application rather than of theory. Most men are ready enough to grant you your principles if only you do not insist on drawing the consequences.

It was so in our subject of the Christian hope. The novelty of Jesus' teaching about the life after death was

not so much in the matter as in the manner of it. He spoke of immortality as a familiar fact, too well known to need defence or definition. As with the prophets, who were His predecessors, it was a corollary from another truth to which He attached supreme importance. This was God's purpose to establish His kingdom. Here therefore we must begin.

2. *The Gospel of the Kingdom*

Jesus, we know, began His public ministry as a preacher of the kingdom. This was the good news He was sent to proclaim. He declared Himself the Messiah, for whom Israel looked, and it was this claim which sent Him to the Cross.

In Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom we see the same blending of the old and the new to which reference has already been made. He described the kingdom in language made familiar by His predecessors. He spoke of it as a hope so well known that description was needless. He came to take up John's work where he laid it down. The consummation John had declared to be imminent He, too, felt was at hand.

To Jesus the kingdom meant three things: first, the reign of God; secondly, the sphere in which that reign is exercised; thirdly, the consequences which it brings with it. In the first sense, the kingdom expresses the principles of God's government as Jesus Himself understood and proclaimed them (*e.g.* Matt. vi. 10); in the second sense, it denotes the society in which these principles are to be realised (*e.g.* Mark x. 14); in the third sense, it expresses the blessings which accompany the acceptance of these principles and membership in this society (*e.g.* Matt. v. 3). In its most comprehensive sense it is the new social order which Jesus felt Himself sent to establish.

In its form Jesus' teaching attaches itself to the tran-

scendent form of the Messianic hope, of which we have already spoken in the last chapter, that is to say, the form which regards it as inaugurating a new era and introducing men into radically different conditions. He speaks of a great catastrophe preceded by signs and portents.[1] He describes the Son of Man as coming on the clouds of heaven and sitting at the right hand of power.[2] He looks for the resurrection of the dead and a final judgment, in which He will be the Judge.[3] This creates a difficulty for our thought which, unlike that of the Jew, is not accustomed to the imagery of apocalyptic, and is apt to take literally what to the eastern mind is only a form of symbolism.

It is all the more important to remember the points in which the transcendent eschatology represented an advance upon the earlier and simpler conception. For one thing it helped to spiritualise the thought of the future. It removed the emphasis from the things of sense and concentrated attention upon moral values. Not marriage and giving in marriage, but righteousness and communion with God were to be the chief concerns of the citizenship of the kingdom. Again, it helped to universalise the Messianic hope. The narrow nationalism which made Jerusalem the world's capital and the temple the centre of the world's worship was not so easy to men who looked for a new heaven and a new earth. If contact was to be made with the past, here was the line which promised most.

This contrast between earth and heaven is quite consistent in Jesus' case with a keen sense of the values of the life here. He delighted in the beauty of Nature, and saw His Father's hand at work in the painting of the lily and the care of the birds. He was a lover of children and a welcome guest at the marriage feast. He was so far from being an ascetic that he was reproached for laxity because

[1] Mark xiii., and parallels. [2] Matt. xxvi. 64.
[3] Matt. xxii. 29-31; xxv. 31-45.

of the company he kept. With suffering in every form he had the keenest sympathy. Much of His time was given to ministry to the sick, and no prophet was more uncompromising in His denunciation against the oppressors of the poor.

But our interest here is in the novel element in Jesus' teaching. This is to be found in the extent to which He made the divine Fatherhood controlling for His thought of the kingdom. However it is to be introduced, the future society is to be one in which men shall live the lives of children with their father, and act toward one another as brothers.

This explains, for one thing, the spirituality in Jesus' view of the kingdom. The kingdom is spiritual, not because it introduces its members into conditions different from those which obtain here, but because it is the scene of those relations of filial trust and brotherly service which Jesus regards as the normal law of human life.

Again, this explains the sense in which Jesus thought of the kingdom as universal. It is universal, not primarily because it is destined to conquer all opposing forces, as the people of Israel conquered the Canaanites who resisted their entrance into the Promised Land, but because the relations of love and brotherhood in which its life consists are open to every child of man.

Finally, this explains the fact that, while its full consummation belongs to the future, the kingdom is, in a true sense, present here and now (Luke xvii. 21). It is present because the relations in which it consists are present, in the life of Jesus Himself, and of all who have learned His lesson and, denying themselves, take up the Cross and follow Him.

This reference to the Cross suggests the point at which Jesus' view differs most widely from that of His predecessors, and that is in the emphasis which He lays upon self-sacrificing love as the law of life in the kingdom.

The lesson is taught in different ways. Sometimes it is taught indirectly, as when Jesus makes service the test of greatness in His kingdom (Luke xxii. 24-27; cf. John xiii. 14). Sometimes, by direct injunction, as where He bids His disciples imitate Him in self-denial (Mark viii. 34, 35). Most clearly and most constantly, by His own example.

We see here the reflex influence of Jesus' own Messianic consciousness. There are two views which have been taken of Jesus' Messianic claim. According to the first, Jesus' thought of His Messiahship did not differ essentially from that of the prophets and seers who had preceded Him. To be Messiah meant to be a king after the fashion of David or Hezekiah, exerting indeed a wider sway and commanding powers more extensive, but in the last analysis depending as they did upon force to establish their supremacy. The shifting of the scene from earth to heaven, which, as we have seen, characterised the later development of the Messianic hope, served indeed to enlarge the scope of Messiah's activity, but it did not alter its nature. Messiahship, whether here or hereafter, meant a world-wide dominion, established and maintained by force.[1]

According to the second view, Messiahship was the form in which Jesus expressed His consciousness of His own divine calling to be the Redeemer of His people. It must be interpreted by what we know of Jesus' own character and ideals. It involved the claim of sovereignty indeed, but a sovereignty of spirit won, as all true mastery is won in the realm of spirit, by the constraint of love. It is the sovereignty which the mother exerts over the child for whom she has given her life, which the teacher exerts over

[1] This is the view of Renan, who sees in the Messianic claim a dream into which Jesus allowed himself to be led against his better judgment, and which involved the surrender, or at least the subordination, of the spiritual principles which were controlling in his earlier ministry. (*Vie de Jésus*, chapter xv.) Martineau (who interprets Messiahship in the same way) avoids the difficulty by denying that Jesus ever made the claim.

the pupils who have fallen under the spell of his ideals, of the friend who freely shares his best with his friend. It is the sovereignty of the suffering servant of Isaiah liii., who proves his right to rule by his willingness to serve. It is the sovereignty which mounts to the throne by way of Gethsemane and Golgotha.

Can we doubt which of these views most truly expresses the thought of Jesus, the friend of man who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister? Can we believe that He who in His exposition of the law clothed old words with a new meaning (cf. Matt. v. and vi.), had no fresh content to put into the Messianic hope? If, as no one doubts, His own character and conduct have something to tell us about the sense in which His ethical teaching is to be understood, we cannot be wrong in using them as a clue to the interpretation of His eschatological doctrine. The surest way to discover what kind of sovereignty He expected in the future is to learn what kind of authority He claimed in the present. If we would understand the nature of the Messianic kingdom, we must study the character of the Messianic King.

But there is another side to the picture which must not be forgotten. Jesus conquers by love, but He is certain that He will conquer. Calvary is the price which He must pay to rule, but He knows that the price is not in vain.

This is the meaning of the advent message, the coming again of the Messiah on the clouds of heaven to receive the heritage which He has rightfully won.[1] The form may

[1] Cf. Mark xiii. and par., Matt. xxvi. 64, etc. As to the sense in which these passages are to be understood, cf. my article in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii. p. 674. Three possibilities may be distinguished, each of which has its advocates: (1) Jesus used the words attributed to Him in the Gospels in a literal sense, to teach a physical advent in the clouds during the lifetime of the generation then living. (2) The evangelists have attributed to Jesus sayings which originally made part of an early Jewish apocalypse, the main outlines of which it is still possible for us to reconstruct. (3) Jesus used the language attributed to Him, in whole or in part, in a symbolic sense, to teach spiritual truths.

belong to the day, as all forms do, but the substance is immortal truth, the truth that love, however it may seem to fail, is certain in the end to win its way to victory.

3. *Jesus' View of Immortality*

We are ready now to understand the place which Jesus assigned to immortality. It was the necessary condition for the fulfilment of His Messianic work. It was the corollary of the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood. This comes out most clearly in His answer to the Sadducees, recorded in Matthew xxii. 23-33. The Sadducees were the conservatives in Jewish society. They represented the old Hebrew tradition which confines hope to the present life. To them Sheol was still what it had been to Job, a place of monotony and gloom, the bourne from which no traveller returns. Unlike the Pharisees, at this point the progressives in thought, they had never moved forward on to the new ground of the resurrection faith.

One day, near the close of His ministry, a group of these conservatives came to the new teacher with a clever question. 'Master,' they began, planting themselves like all traditionalists on the authority of the past, 'Moses said, if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren, and the first married and died, and, having no seed, left his wife unto his brother. In like manner the second also, and the third unto the seventh, and after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her?' (vv. 24-27). But Jesus was not to be caught in the trap so skilfully laid for Him. The resurrection life for which He looked was not to be simply a continuation of the present life of sense and of sex. It was to be a life of a different kind, such as that which is lived by the angels who wait continually in the presence

of God. 'Ye do err,' He said to His questioners, 'not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the Resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at His teaching' (vv. 29-33).

Two points are made clear by this significant passage: first, the ground of Jesus' faith in immortality; and secondly, its nature. The ground is the inherent relationship between the spirit of the human child and that of the divine Father in whose image he is made. All secondary considerations are passed over, and hope is planted upon this unshakable foundation. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. That which He has made and for which He cares cannot perish.

No less instructive is the light shed upon Jesus' view of the nature of the life after death. It is a life of spiritual communion with God, such communion as is enjoyed by the unfallen spirits, the clearness of whose vision sin has never dimmed, and the completeness of whose service selfishness has never impaired. Everything else is dismissed as irrelevant. The nature of the resurrection body, the conditions of knowledge and of activity in the unseen world—of these we learn nothing from Jesus' answer. This only is clear, that to Him there is moral continuity. Death may be a change, but it is not a break. The life that Abraham began to live with God in the plains of Haran centuries ago he is still living to-day.

The same impression of continuity is confirmed by the other passages in which Jesus refers to the life after death. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31), we see the deeds done here bearing their inevitable fruit

in the life to come. Dives reaps what he has sown, and recognises the justice of his fate. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom enjoys at last the peace which was his rightful desert even when he lay a beggar at the rich man's door.

This sense of the oneness of the moral life is still further confirmed by Abraham's answer to Dives. When the rich man, moved with compassion for his brothers on earth, pleads that Lazarus be allowed to return with a message of warning, he is told that it is impossible. 'They have Moses and the prophets,' replies Abraham, 'let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, Father Abraham,' but if one go to them from the dead they will repent. And he said unto him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead' (vv. 29-31).

Even more striking in its witness to the persistence of moral values in the life after death is Jesus' word to the dying thief on the cross. 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise' (Luke xxiii. 43). What Jesus had done for the outcast woman and the penitent sinner in Galilee and Jerusalem, that He expected still to be able to do in the new country toward which He was travelling.

What the nature of that country is like in detail we learn little from Jesus. The words in which He describes it, Hades, Paradise, Abraham's bosom, are taken from the Jewish apocalypses,[1] but we must be on our guard not to be deceived by words. Here, as in the case of the Messianic idea itself, we must remember that Jesus used old words as the vehicle of a new teaching, and that what He said must be interpreted in the light of what He was.

This transformation of an old form is illustrated most clearly in the great judgment parable which concludes the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. The scene is that already made familiar to us by our study of the apoca-

[1] Cf. Baruch li. 11, iv. Mac. xiii. 16.

lyptic literature of Judaism. It is the great assize where all men living and dead are gathered to give account of their deeds before the final judge, but the figure who sits upon the throne is new, and the principles which determine his decision unfamiliar. The judge is Jesus, and the test on which He makes everything depend is simple kindliness to those in need.

'Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.' (Matt. xxv. 34-40.)

One is struck, as one reads these words of Jesus, with the rigorousness of His judgment. Gentle as He is in spirit, tender and compassionate to all in need, there is yet a sternness in His condemnation all the more impressive because it springs from a heart surcharged with love. The Saviour who wept over Jerusalem could pronounce the woes upon the Pharisees. The Judge who welcomed the righteous to His right hand could say to the wicked on His left, Depart from Me, ye cursed. Those who desire an easy gospel must look elsewhere than to Jesus. There is no standard more uncompromising than that of redemptive love.

As to the nature of the fate that will befall those who are finally impenitent, we learn nothing new from Jesus. Here, too, we move in the familiar imagery of apocalyptic,

the fire, the worm, Gehenna, the weeping and gnashing of teeth.[1] We must be on our guard against interpreting literally what is obviously intended as symbol. We must remember too Jesus' purpose, which was not to explain the nature of punishment after death, nor to define its duration, but to declare the principles by which the issues of life and death are finally determined.

The passages which we have thus far been considering have all been taken from the Synoptics. We have based our study of Jesus' teaching upon them rather than upon the Fourth Gospel, partly because we are on firmer ground critically, partly because the Fourth Gospel raises questions of interpretation which needlessly complicate the issue. In the Synoptics we hear Jesus speaking as He was heard by those to whom His words first came on the mountain-side or by the lake-shore.[2] In the Fourth Gospel we have His teaching reflected through the medium of another consciousness, interpreting the Master's words in the light of His own experience and of the experience of the later Church. There is a mystic tone in the utterances of the Jesus of John's Gospel which is not so apparent in the utterances recorded by Matthew or Mark. The sense of a great crisis impending is no longer prominent. Here and now the issues of life are decided, and resurrection and judgment are present facts as well as future events.

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.' (v. 24.)

'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.' (xi. 25.)

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[1] Cf. note 2, p. 71.

[2] This is not intended to deny the presence of a subjective element even in the Synoptics, but only to emphasise the fact, now very generally admitted, that as compared with the Fourth Gospel, this is less prominent, and, for our present purpose, negligible.

Yet, when we read between the lines the impression gained is the same which we have carried away from the Synoptic teaching. It is that of the continuity of moral life—the assurance that the values here experienced can never be lost because they are grounded in the nature of things, which is only another way of expressing the loving purpose of God, our Father.

'Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.' (xiv. 1-6.)

'No one cometh unto the Father but by me.' So we are brought back again to Jesus. He is in the way to the Father, and so to the mansions which the Father has prepared for His children in the unseen home beyond the veil.

We are brought back, I say, to Jesus, but we only half express what He means for our hope when we confine our attention to His teaching. He Himself is more than all He said, and the greatest of His contributions to faith in immortality is His own character.

This, too, is characteristic of Jesus everywhere. What He taught gets its flavour from what He was. Others besides Jesus had called God Father, and assured men of His righteousness and of His love. Jesus lived such a life that men understood more fully than ever before what it means to be righteous and loving. His person became the symbol by which men visualised the unseen God. He that had seen Him had seen the Father.

So it is with our matter of immortality. Jesus lived such

a life as to make it incredible that He should die. He was so one with the Father in thought and feeling, so loyal to God's purpose of salvation, so generous in His devotion to His fellow-men, so lavish in His gift of Himself to all in need, that it was impossible to believe that the time would ever come when His loving ministry would cease. To do this would be to throw doubt upon the cause itself, for with Jesus person and work were blended into an indissoluble unity. How intimate this connection was in the thought of the first disciples we can measure in some degree by the shock which came to them from the crucifixion. To them it meant the failure of all to which they had looked forward for this life and the next as well. If God suffered His dearly beloved Son Jesus to perish on the Cross, what hope was there for common men and women? It is against this background that we must set the Resurrection of Jesus if we are rightly to understand its contribution to the Christian hope.

CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECTS OF THE RESURRECTION UPON THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

History records no more amazing transformation than that which took place in the attitude of the disciples between the Friday afternoon of the Crucifixion and the Sunday evening following. Then they were utterly downcast, in despair for themselves and hopeless for their cause. The Messiah, in whom they trusted, had been nailed to the Cross between two thieves, and with Him was crucified all the new hope which He had brought into their lives.

Yet within three days these same men were transformed. They had recovered their lost confidence, and were as bold as they had hitherto been fearful. They began to gather in their old haunts and to resume their old practices. The song that Good Friday had banished, as they supposed forever, was again upon their lips. Messages were sent to the absent of the strange experiences which had befallen their friends, experiences so singular as to be incredible until confirmed by personal experience. Yet, as the days passed, this sudden confidence did not wane. Those who had doubted at first joined the ranks of believers. What had been whispered in secret was now proclaimed from the housetops. Soon word reached the authorities that the disciples of the Nazarene were still loyal to their old allegiance. Indeed, they were preaching their crucified leader as God's Messiah risen from the dead.

What had happened to account for this revolution?

The answer which the disciples gave was as strange as it was decisive. They had seen Jesus alive after His death. He had appeared at first to two or three, to a woman watching by the grave for the dawning of the first day of the week that she might pay the last tribute of affection to the dear body that was all that was left to her; to Peter and John, hurried to the sepulchre by the rumour of the extraordinary event; then on Sunday evening to a company of disciples gathered, as was their custom, in the upper room for prayer. Still other appearances followed, some in Galilee, others in Jerusalem. The doubter Thomas beholds and is convinced. The fishermen plying their trade on Gennesaret see the Master walking by the lake-shore as of old. James, the Lord's kinsman after the flesh, meets the brother whose claim he had rejected during His life and joins the company of disciples. Once Jesus appears to over five hundred brethren at once. So, by one experience after another, the first testimony is confirmed, and the disciples realise that their Master is risen indeed.

But more wonderful things still are to happen. The authorities, alarmed at this unexpected recrudescence of a superstition which they believed themselves to have stamped out forever, resort to sterner measures. The leaders are beaten and forbidden to preach the risen Master. When this fails Peter and John are imprisoned, and Stephen is put to death. The disciples, fleeing to other cities for safety, are followed by emissaries of the Sanhedrim. Among others there is one extremely zealous, a young man named Saul, who had received a commission from the chief priests to follow the fugitives to Damascus. As he nears the city, intent upon his self-appointed task, he is suddenly arrested in mid course. He falls to the ground overcome by some cause which is hidden from his companions, and when he reaches the city, instead of persecuting the Christians, as had been his first intention,

he is found in their company, and presently makes public confession of his faith in Jesus.

What has happened to Saul to change the current of his life? He tells us that it was the same experience which had come to Peter and James before him. He had seen Jesus, and the meeting had transformed the persecutor into the apostle.

We have no detailed account of what Saul saw from his own hand, but we know that he believed himself to have seen what the other disciples saw. He parallels his own experience with theirs as similar in kind, and the change which it brought about in his life was no less revolutionary.[1] Henceforward, as he tells us himself, he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 2). He became the foremost Christian missionary, carrying the message of the risen Saviour to regions where no other foot than his had penetrated. Year after year passed, but the strength of his conviction never wavered. Wherever he went, he was conscious of an unseen presence. Whatever he did, he claimed the sanction of an invisible authority. The Christ whom he had once persecuted was now the constant companion of his spirit, so that he could say of himself with truth, 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20).

The experience of Paul is typical of that of his fellow-Christians. They were conscious of serving a living and risen Saviour. Not all realised the fact as keenly as Paul, or expressed what they believed in the same way. But they were all at one in accepting the fact of the Resurrection, and for the faith of all it was fundamental. 'This Jesus,' says Peter in Acts, 'did God raise up, whereof we are witnesses' (ii. 32). 'Having then a great high priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,' says the writer to the Hebrews, 'let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 7; cf. Gal. i. 15, 16; Acts ix. 1-9; xxii. 3-21.

be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (iv. 14, 15). 'My little children,' says John, 'if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous' (1 John ii. 1). 'Jesus Christ,' says the writer of Revelation, 'who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead' (Rev. i. 5). So faith in the risen Jesus weaves its golden thread throughout all the literature of the apostolic age.

It has been the same ever since. The faith which has conquered the world has been faith in the risen Jesus. The Christ of history has been not simply the prophet of Nazareth, not even the atoning Saviour, but the conqueror of death, the one who has brought life and immortality to light through the Resurrection.

'I believe,' so run the words of the ancient creed, 'in Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.'

It is clear, then, that with the Resurrection of Jesus we have to do with a fact of far-reaching importance for Christian faith and life. It is necessary, therefore, to consider in some detail what its significance is. Four points will require our attention: first, the fact; secondly, its meaning; thirdly, its evidence; fourthly, its consequences.[1]

1. *The Fact of the Resurrection*

And first, of the fact. What was it that actually happened in those momentous days that witnessed the rebirth of Christian faith? The disciples asserted that they saw Jesus alive after His death under conditions

[1] On the Resurrection cf. the literature cited in the Appendix.

which made mutual recognition possible, and the most rigorous criticism sees no reason to question the sincerity of their belief.

To be sure, there are differences in the details of the report. The list of appearances given by the Apostle Paul, the earliest documentary evidence which has come down to us, does not agree at all points with the account in the Gospels. Nor are these altogether easy to reconcile one with another. Matthew puts the appearance to the eleven in Galilee, Luke and John make Jerusalem the scene of the first appearance. Criticism has been busy with these discrepancies, and has evolved many theories to account for the records as we have them.[1]

But whatever may be the difficulties as to order or date, no sober critic doubts that at the basis of the Gospel story there lies a core of solid fact. The old theories of deceit on the part of the disciples, of the resurrection of a body only in appearance dead, have been hopelessly discredited. We may take for granted that within a very few days after the Crucifixion the disciples actually saw what they believed to be their Master, and that no subsequent experience was able to shake their confidence in the fact that He had risen from the dead.

When we ask more particularly as to the nature of the appearances, we are involved in greater difficulty. Two different answers are suggested by the records which have come down to us. According to the first, Jesus appeared to the disciples in the same body of flesh and blood in which His earthly life had been lived. He ate in their presence (Luke xxiv. 42, 43); He showed them the prints in His hands and His feet (39, 40); He bade Thomas thrust his hand into His side that he might be sure that it was indeed his Master whom he saw (John xx. 20, 27).

[1] A convenient summary of the different possibilities, with the arguments for and against each, is given by Lake: *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, New York, 1907, pp. 201-219.

But, even here the record is not clear. The same Gospel which insists upon the identity of Christ's physical body relates facts which seem inconsistent with what we know of the properties of matter. The body appears and disappears, passes through closed doors, has strange qualities which prevent immediate recognition (Luke xxiv. 16, 31, 37; John xx. 19, 26). It is not easy to see how both accounts can be harmonised. The suggestion is natural that we have to do with two different conceptions, an earlier tradition which in the course of time has been modified by later reflection.[1]

This conclusion is reinforced by the testimony of our earliest eye-witness. St. Paul, as we have seen, regards his own experience as parallel with that of the earlier disciples. Yet, when we study his own account of the Resurrection body,[2] we find the features emphasised in the Fourth Gospel conspicuously absent. The body which is raised is not a physical but a spiritual body (1 Cor. xv. 44). It is no more like the old than the plant is like the seed from which it springs (vv. 37, 38). That was corruptible, but this is incorruptible (v. 42), that mortal, but this immortal (v. 53). Indeed, this must be so if it is to be fitted for the service of the risen Messiah, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, which is the realm of the spirit (v. 50).

This conception of a spiritual body presents difficulties to our thought, for we have lost the presuppositions which made it natural. Our world is no longer like that of the ancients, made up of heaven and earth and an underworld, places each of them with as definite a location and as detailed a geography as the familiar planet on which our lot is cast. We no longer think of ourselves as

[1] Cf. Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel*, pp. 131, 132; Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, London, 1897, vol. i. p. 650; Lake, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-226.

[2] It is true that the object of Paul's description is primarily the resurrection body of Christians, but the parallelism in vv. 20-23 makes it clear that the description is valid also for that of Christ, 'the first fruits.'

surrounded by hosts of spirits, good and evil, angels and demons, as the case may be. We have long outgrown the primitive conception still familiar to the contemporaries of the Apostle, of spirit as a more tenuous form of matter. To us the terms, body and spirit, are mutually exclusive. Spirit we can understand. It is that which thinks and feels and wills. Body we can understand. It is that which has extension, location and motion. But a spiritual body is a union of opposites which conveys no clear meaning to our imagination.[1]

Two methods have been suggested to overcome the difficulty. One is to seek the clue to the Resurrection experience in some hitherto undiscovered property of matter. The other is to conclude that in 1 Cor. xv., we have the description in terms of sense of what we should call an inner experience, the revelation of spirit to spirit. Each has its disadvantages. The difficulty with the first is that it is unable to explain the method of Jesus' self-manifestation to His disciples. In order to be true to the description of the risen Jesus given in the New Testament, we are obliged so far to emphasise the contrast between the body of the glorified Saviour, and this present body of flesh and blood, as to remove it to a realm inaccessible to our present organs of sense. The difficulty with the

[1] This difficulty is frankly recognised by recent writers on the subject. Thus, Dr. Denney, even while insisting in the strongest terms upon the bodily character of the resurrection appearances, admits our inability to penetrate into the nature of the experiences they describe. The terms used by the Apostle, such as power and glory, record the impression produced upon his own mind, but beyond this they do not carry us. 'It is no use asking for a definition of such words. Paul could no more have given them than we can. It is no use asking for an explanation of the precise relation between the body of humiliation and the body of glory. Such an explanation was entirely out of his reach. All he could have asserted and what he undoubtedly did assert, was that the same Jesus whose body had been broken on the cross had manifested Himself to him in divine splendour and power, and though he should never be able to say anything about the connection of the two modes of being further than this, that Jesus had been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, it would not in the least affect his assurance that the exaltation of Jesus was as real as His crucifixion.' (*Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 105).

second is that it seems to resolve the whole experience into a purely subjective phenomenon without objective basis, and so to destroy its significance for Christian faith as a divine revelation.[1]

It is not strange, in view of these facts, that there should be many in our day who find in the doctrine of the Resurrection a cause of serious perplexity. Some put it aside altogether as belonging to a world of thought which they have outgrown. Others hold the fact indeed, but without clear understanding of its significance. It no longer holds the central place in their gospel. It makes no positive contribution to their religious life. It is a survival rather than a support of faith.

Such a situation is full of danger. A doctrine that is held half-heartedly is of little value either to the holder or to others. If the Resurrection faith is to survive, it must be held triumphantly as a satisfying and an inspiring conviction. It must be to us what it was to those who first held it, a gospel,—good news for the world.

But is this possible to-day? Have not the changes already alluded to so far altered the situation that our attitude toward the Resurrection must also necessarily change? Granting its historical importance for the first disciples, does it follow that it still has a positive contribution to make to our hope to-day? This brings us to our second question,—the question of the meaning of the Resurrection.

[1] Cf. Denney, *op. cit.*, p. 109. Dr. Denney vigorously protests against the disposition, manifest in certain quarters, to resolve the resurrection into 'a pathological phenomenon, belonging to disease and disorder, not to the health and sanity of the human spirit.' As he truly says, 'It is not easy to discredit offhand as a mere illusion what has meant so much in the life of the human race' (p. 109). With the spirit that prompts these words every Christian must feel himself in sympathy. It must be remembered, however, that among those who have adopted the so-called vision hypothesis have been some who have been firm believers in the fact of the resurrection. It is important to distinguish between the position of those men who use the psychological approach as a means of making real to themselves the method of Jesus' self-manifestation, and those who use it, not so much to explain, as to explain away the central reality of Christian faith.

2. *The Meaning of the Resurrection*

Why, then, I repeat, is it so important to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? What difference does it make to us to-day whether or no we share the faith of the first disciples concerning the risen Jesus.

To answer this question aright we must begin by reminding ourselves what difference it made to them. To Paul certainly it made the greatest possible difference. It made all the difference between happiness and misery, between salvation and perdition, between heaven and hell. If Christ has not been raised, he declared to his converts, 'then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain' (1 Cor. xv. 14).

Why was this true? It was because the resurrection established Jesus' Messiahship. It was the method which God took to convince those whose faith had been staggered by the Crucifixion that Jesus was really what He claimed to be, the Lord of the world, and the Saviour of mankind.

Consider the situation in which the disciples found themselves on the evening of Good Friday. They had accepted the Messiahship of Jesus—not at once, to be sure, nor with clear understanding of all that their own acceptance meant—but definitely and, as they supposed, irrevocably. They believed that He was the promised deliverer whom the prophets of Israel had foretold, who was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God upon earth, and introduce the new age of righteousness and love. To be sure, Jesus Himself had warned them that He must suffer and die, but His words had fallen upon deaf ears. Suffering and death were the last things that a Jew associated with Messiahship—least of all the shameful death of the Cross. To the disciples there could be but one interpretation of Calvary. It was the proof that God had dis-

owned Jesus, and by suffering Him to die the death which the law called accursed, definitely disproved His Messianic claim.

Imagine, then, what it must have meant to Peter and the rest to have the lost faith restored. The Resurrection, I repeat, was God's way of informing them that the unbelievable had happened, that the crucified Jesus was in fact what they had supposed Him to be, God's appointed Saviour, and, therefore, still the central factor in human life and destiny.

It will help us to understand the real significance of the Resurrection for the Christian hope, if we contrast this answer with one or two others which are often given. The effect of the Resurrection was not, as we are sometimes told, to establish the fact of a life after death, still less was it to satisfy men's curiosity as to its nature. It was rather to shed new light on the meaning and value of life here.

It was not to establish the fact of a life after death. It is often said that belief in immortality stands or falls with the Resurrection of Jesus. But it needs only a moment's reflection to perceive that this is not true. Certainly the fact of Jesus' Resurrection has made it easier to believe in immortality than it was before. It has added another convincing argument to those already in our possession, but it has confirmed a pre-existing faith. It has not brought a new faith into existence. If our study of the preparation for the Christian hope proves anything, it should have made this clear.

Let us recall again the situation as we have already outlined it. What was it that explained the disciples' despair? The fact that they had lost their faith in immortality? But they had not lost it. They still believed, as they had always believed, in the life after death. They still looked, as they had always looked, for the Resurrection and Judgment to come. Even concerning

Jesus they did not doubt that He was still alive, any more than their ancestors believed of the meanest slave that his spirit ceased to exist at death. But Jesus was not what they had believed Him to be. That was the root of their bitterness. He was not God's chosen Messiah. He was not the promised deliverer for whom, in common with all devout Israelites, they had been looking. The word of the disciples to the risen Saviour on the Emmaus road tells the whole story. 'We hoped that it was He that should redeem Israel' (Luke xxiv. 21). We hoped, but it seems that we were mistaken. That lost confidence the Resurrection restored.

Nor was the significance of the Resurrection to be found in its revelation of the nature of the life after death. This, too, is often asserted, but incorrectly. Whatever view we may take as to the nature of the Resurrection, whether we regard it as exceptional, or as typical; as physical, or as spiritual—in either event we are involved in all the difficulties which hide from our ken the conditions in the unseen country. We cannot pass the veil which hides from our sight those who have gone before. If we might venture to paraphrase the words of Abraham to Dives, it is true here, too, that there are things which it would be impossible for us to understand, even if one were to rise from the dead.

If proof were needed we have only to consider the facts. If it was God's purpose through the Resurrection of Jesus to inform us as to the conditions of life after death, He has failed in His purpose, for certainly we are as far as ever from agreement. As there were different views of the future before Christ came, so there have been differences ever since. All the old types with which we have become familiar, from that of a physical resurrection in the literal sense to that of immortality pure and simple, still persist, and each appeals for confirmation to the Book which tells us the story of Jesus' Resurrection. Certainly if the

Resurrection is to deserve the central importance given it by Paul, it must have some other meaning.

What that meaning was we have already seen. It was the proof of the Messiahship of Jesus. It was God's witness that His claim was true, and it carried with it as corollary the entire conception of life, of salvation and of service with which Jesus was identified.

This was indeed a matter of supreme importance. It meant that the communion which the disciples had enjoyed with their Master was not to be interrupted. It meant that in hours of discouragement and gloom they could still turn to Him for help. It meant that what He had told them about God as their Father, and man as God's child, and God's purpose to establish His Kingdom in the world, was all true. But it meant also, and this was the new and revolutionary thing, that they had a new understanding of the nature of this Kingdom and of the method by which its establishment was to be brought about. It meant that they realised for the first time the cost of salvation, and the price, in self-sacrificing love, which God was willing to pay to win men for Himself. It meant that the Cross, which had been to them, as to all their contemporaries, a stumbling block and foolishness, was now the centre of their religion, the supreme proof of God's wisdom and power. It meant, in a word, that they had seen God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

In the light of this discussion we must re-define the fact which is at stake. It is not simply the fact that God raised the body of Jesus from the grave, but that Jesus survived death in such a form as to manifest to His disciples His continued interest in and presence with them, and to assure them that in spite of crucifixion and apparent failure, He was still what they had hoped and believed Him to be, God's promised Messiah, the central figure in human history, and the Mediator of the world's salvation.

This, then, is the fact which is the object of Christian

faith ; not simply an event in the past, whose significance was exhausted in its happening, but a continuing reality which evidences its presence through the effects which it is still producing in human experience.

3. *The Evidence of the Resurrection*

We are ready now to turn to our third question, the question of the evidence for the Resurrection. It is clear that if our definition is correct, this must include much more than the testimony which established the events of Easter and the days which immediately followed. It must include all that bears directly or indirectly upon the great fact which these events attest, the fact namely, of the continued existence and spiritual supremacy of Jesus. Even to the first disciples it was true that their faith in the Resurrection rested upon deeper grounds than the evidence of their senses that they had seen Jesus alive after His death. What was at stake was not simply the revival of a human body after the experience we call physical death. If that had been all, Jesus' Resurrection would not have differed from that of Lazarus, or even from the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, as to the reality of which no one in the ancient church doubted. But these carried with them no such consequences for faith as the Resurrection of Jesus. What gave Jesus' Resurrection its unique significance was its setting in human history, its relation to that which had gone before, and to that which followed after and, above all, the nature of the person who was raised.

I say, the nature of the person who was raised. This is the fact upon which everything turns. If the Resurrection of Lazarus is to Christians simply one of a series of miracles through which God's presence and power are manifested in human history, it is because Lazarus was simply an ordinary man. If, on the other hand, we

separate the Resurrection of Jesus from all other events, and make it the central fact in history, it is because Jesus is more than an ordinary man. It is because he is to us what He was to the first disciples, God's promised Messiah, the central figure in human history, the Saviour of the world.

This judgment, in turn, rests upon two grounds, each of which adds new force to the events recorded in the Gospels. First, the impression produced by the character of Jesus, and secondly, the influence which He has exerted in human history.

Both of these influences affected the faith of the first disciples. The Jesus whom they saw on that first Easter Sunday was no stranger to them. He was the Master with whom they had walked in familiar intercourse during many months, whom they had heard speaking the words of life, whom they had seen working the works of love, to whose claim to be Messiah their own conscience had yielded a willing assent. He was one whose personality had already so strongly impressed them that they were eager to believe in His divine authority, if only faith were possible. The Resurrection removed the obstacle which Good Friday had put in their way and gave their faith free course.

But this alone is not all. Faith in the Resurrection carried with it certain consequences as to the presence and power of Jesus in human history. These consequences must follow, if the faith were to be justified. Jesus must show Himself in the future, as He had shown Himself in the past, the central factor in the disciples' lives, and the controlling influence in the movement with which they were identified, and this, as a matter of fact, is what we find to be the case.

One is impressed again and again, as one reads the New Testament, how large a place the risen Christ holds in the experience of the disciples. This is all the more significant when we remember the different viewpoints from which

the different books were written. Thus, in Acts attention is fixed upon the future and, in expectation of Christ's speedy coming, the interests of the present life fade into insignificance. The Resurrection is God's witness that 'this Jesus who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven' (i. 11). Yet, even in Acts the Resurrection has a present as well as a future meaning. The risen Jesus is active in His church by His Spirit, and the new consciousness of power in which the disciples rejoice is recognised as His gift (ii. 33).

In the Letter to the Hebrews, on the other hand, greater emphasis is laid upon the past. In the light of the Resurrection the earthly life of Jesus receives a new meaning. It was the means by which He was trained for the heavenly priesthood which He now fulfils. It was the time when, being conformed in all things to his brethren, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (v. 8), and so was fitted for the great sacrifice of Himself on Calvary, which has opened once for all, for all who trust Him, that free access to God which the old sacrifices were unable to secure (x. 19).

With Paul and John it is the present significance of the Resurrection which is most in evidence. They, too, look for a future coming, a social consummation when the goal for which we here strive in vain shall be perfectly realised (*e.g.*, 1 Thess. iv. 13-v.; Romans viii. 18-24; 1 John iii. 2), but the life for which they look by and by is not different in kind from the life which they enjoy here and now. Through Christ sin has already been conquered, darkness dispelled, the dead in trespasses made alive. Already the Christian is a new man, living in the Spirit and enjoying daily communion with his risen Saviour. He does not need to wait for another life to enter into communion with his Master, for to him to live is Christ (Phil. i. 21). He does not depend upon the testimony of others

for the truth which he proclaims, for he has the ever-present witness of Christ's Spirit (Rom. viii. 10). What though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Cor. iv. 16). He is conscious that nothing can separate him from the love of Christ (Rom. viii. 35). He is more than conqueror through Him that loved him (*Ibid.*, v. 37).

This present Christian experience, it cannot be too often repeated, is the convincing evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus. It is not simply the fact that certain early documents report that the grave where Jesus' body was laid was found empty. This, as Dr. Denney has well said, is 'the least important part of the evidence with which we have to deal. . . . The real historical evidence for the Resurrection is the fact that it was believed, preached, propagated, and produced its fruit and effect in the new phenomenon of the Christian Church, long before any of our gospels was written. . . . It is not this or that in the New Testament—it is not the story of the empty tomb, or of the appearing of Jesus in Jerusalem or in Galilee—which is the primary evidence for the Resurrection; it is the New Testament itself. The life that throbs in it from beginning to end, the life that always fills us again with wonder as it beats upon us from its pages, is the life which the risen Saviour has quickened in Christian souls' (pp. 100, 101).[1]

The bearing of this upon our matter of the Resurrection is plain. The fact for faith is the continued existence and supremacy of Jesus, and this is a fact in the realm of spirit. The significance of the events recorded in our Gospels is that they are God's method of bringing this fact to the consciousness of the disciples, and so to the Christian community as a whole. Any interpretation of the facts which is consistent with this double conviction

[1] On the question of the empty grave, cf. Lake, *op. cit.* pp. 169-201; 241-253; Denney, *op. cit.* p. 107.

conserves the interests which are vital to Christian faith.[1]

In the light of this discussion we are prepared to answer the question raised at the outset, as to the present significance of the Resurrection for Christian faith. Considered as an *aid* to faith, a historical event to be established by testimony, it is less important for us than for the first disciples, because we have other evidence of Jesus' Messiahship not at their disposal, namely, the experience of Jesus' spiritual supremacy through all the intervening centuries. Considered as an *object* of faith, a fact in the larger and more comprehensive sense in which we have just defined the term, it is just as important to-day as it ever was, since it is the expression of the central reality of the Christian religion, the Lordship and Saviourhood of Jesus.

We have considered the fact of the Resurrection; we have considered its meaning; we have considered the evidence upon which it rests. It remains, finally, to remind ourselves of the consequences which follow from it for the Christian hope. These have already been so far anticipated by what has gone before that they can be summed up very briefly.

[1] Much confusion is often caused in religious discussion from failure to remark the ambiguity of the word, fact. Christianity, it cannot be too often reasserted, is a religion of reality and, like everything that deals with reality, must make its final appeal to the facts. But there are facts and facts; facts inner and facts outer; realities of nature and realities of spirit, and we must be on our guard lest in our anxiety to establish realities of one order we seem to throw discredit upon realities of the other. The fact of facts for Christian faith is the existence of God, but it is a reality in the world of spirit. The truth of truths for Christian experience is God's presence in the world to-day as a living, active personality, manifesting Himself spiritually to the spirit of man, His child. This manifestation takes many forms, and uses many methods, some exceptional, some regular; some outward, some inward. But in the last analysis it is always the manifestation of Spirit to spirit, carrying with it, as all spiritual experience does, its own immediate attestation. To discredit the sufficiency of such evidence is to throw doubt upon the reality of religion itself, and to open the way to an all-devouring scepticism.

4. *The Consequences of the Resurrection*

We have seen that the first effect of Jesus' Resurrection was to transform the disciples' view of the present life. It made them conscious of communion with a living Master and gave them access to unsuspected resources of power. But this is only half the story. The Resurrection had a future as well as a present reference, and powerfully affected their view of the life to come.

How could it be otherwise ? For one thing, it reinforced the evidence of the fact. 'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him' (1 Thess. iv. 14). The comfort which the anticipation of a meeting with friends who have gone before has always brought to sorrowing hearts belonged to the early Christians in full degree. Like Abraham, their faces were turned toward 'a better country, that is, a heavenly' (Heb. xi. 16). Bearing within themselves the witness of the Spirit, it was easy to believe in the redemption of the body which was to take place in that new day when creation itself should be delivered from its bondage through the revelation of the Sons of God (Rom. viii. 18-25).

Even more important than reassurance as to the fact was the new insight as to the nature of the life after death. Not indeed that the Resurrection of Jesus satisfied the curiosity of the mind as to the conditions under which the new life is to be lived,—that, as we have seen, was not the case—but that it met the deeper needs of the heart. It brought assurance that the life to come would be a life of fellowship with Christ. If to Paul to live was Christ to die was gain, for dying meant departing to be with Christ, which was very far better (Phil. i. 23). 'In My Father's house,' Jesus had said, 'are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare

a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also' (John xiv. 1, 2). The Resurrection was God's witness that this word of Jesus was true. He who had come once would come again, and so they were content to work and wait in peace, knowing that whether living or dying they were with the Lord.[1]

To realise what this assurance meant for the experience of the earliest Christians we must recall again Socrates' memorable word recorded in an earlier chapter. 'We go our ways, I to die and you to live. Which is better, God

[1] An interesting question, not without importance in its bearing upon the subjects already discussed, is as to the effect of the resurrection faith upon the view taken in the New Testament of the life *immediately* after death. The clearest reference to this is the famous passage (1 Peter iii. 19 *sq.*) in which Jesus is represented as going in the spirit to preach to the spirits in prison. This would seem to point to a moral life in Sheol similar to that which we have found in the later Jewish apocalypses. The significant thing about the Petrine passage is that the fate of the wicked in the underworld is not regarded as irrevocable, but the redemptive ministry of Christ is extended to the antediluvian dead.

On the other hand, we have passages which speak of the dead in Christ as asleep (*e.g.* 1 Thess. iv. 13), from which it has been argued that in their speedy expectation of the Advent the early Christians passed lightly over what we have since come to call the intermediate state, confining their expectation of future communion with Christ to the Parousia. I cannot believe that this view is well founded. Even though we should refer to the Advent the passages commonly interpreted as applying to the life immediately after death (*e.g.* 2 Cor. v. 1-4; Phil. i. 23), the fact would still remain that Paul's entire conception of the relation between the Christian and his Master is such that it is unthinkable that he should regard it as interrupted by death.

Worthy of more serious consideration is the opinion that it is possible to trace a development in the apostle's thought of the future. (So Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 395-401. Further references in Kennedy: *St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things*, p. 262.) Thus in Thessalonians, we are told, the impending Advent is so present to the apostle's imagination that he gives no thought to the intermediate state: whereas, in 2 Cor. v. 1-4, he has begun to speculate as to the conditions of the soul immediately after death.

Here, too, the probabilities seem opposed to such a development. The motives which led to the Christianisation of Sheol were present from the very first in the new relation established between Paul and his Master on the Damascus road. It is difficult to believe that a man so acute as the apostle should have failed to follow them to their legitimate conclusion. In this connection it is worth while to recall the remark of Wernle, quoted by Kennedy, *op. cit.* p. 271, 'The man who wrote the great resurrection chapter in 1 Cor. did not possess the capacity for altering his opinions which belongs to the modern theologian.'

only knows.' In the unknown country whither he was journeying, what experience might await the traveller? Perhaps high communion with the spirits of the past, 'Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer'? But again, perhaps not. God only knew, and the veil which hid the future from the present He had not vouchsafed to raise. The Resurrection of Jesus was to the early Christians God's raising of the veil. It assured them that dying meant going to be with Christ, which was very far better.

Such, then, in briefest compass, was the contribution of the Resurrection to the Christian hope—a new assurance of the fact of immortality, a new conception of its value. The faith which had accepted the Lordship of Jesus here now reached across the grave in confident anticipation of renewed communion with Him in the new service to which He was still to call.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHIEF HISTORIC FORMS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

We have reviewed the antecedents of the Christian hope. We have considered the contribution of Jesus through His teaching, His character, and, above all, His Resurrection. We have studied the effects of the Resurrection upon the men who stood nearest to Him and observed its influence both on their experience here and on their hope for the future. It remains to follow the later development of the new hope, and to consider the chief forms which it has assumed in the course of the succeeding centuries.

Foremost among the influences to be taken into account is the inheritance of Christianity from Judaism. This inheritance, as we have seen, included much that was noble and uplifting. But it included also elements which were less advanced, and which acted as a hindrance rather than a help. Side by side with the spiritual ideal of a Jeremiah, or of the great prophet of the exile, the primitive hope of an earthly kingdom and the apocalyptic despair of the present world lived on, and their effect upon the Christian hope was often to obscure the distinctive contribution of Jesus.

Scarcely less important was the influence of Greece. Here, too, the effect of the contact was both good and evil. It was good in that it reinforced the spiritual elements in the Christian ideal, and gave Christian apologists new weapons in their battle against materialism and idolatry.

It was evil in that it obscured the concrete elements in the Christian hope, and substituted for the ethical and religious grounds on which it originally rested, arguments which were abstract and speculative.

Under this double influence the eschatology of the Church was developed. In its present form it is a complex structure, into the making of which many elements have entered. From Israel came the doctrines of the Resurrection and of the Advent; from Greece, the doctrine of natural immortality;[1] from Jesus, the new content which Christianity has put into both.

We are not interested in the details of the development, but only in the main forms of thought which emerge. Three such forms meet us, all claiming the name Christian, each differing in important respects from the others, all three persisting to our own day. The first centres expectation upon the personal return of Jesus to earth to establish His kingdom, and postpones till after the Advent all hope of permanent progress and happiness. The second concentrates attention upon the life immediately after death. It makes the other world the scene of a progressive purification, a training school in which the temptations not completely conquered here are mastered, and the penalties still due for sins committed here are paid. The third makes death itself the turning-point of destiny,

[1] The doctrine that the soul or spirit is a simple substance and therefore imperishable. We have traced the rise of this doctrine in Plato and his successors. We have noted its influence upon Alexandrian Judaism, but it is not found in our Bible, either in Old or New Testament. Like other elements in later speculative theology it enters Christianity by way of Alexandria. Origen teaches it in its original Greek form, including the doctrine of pre-existence on the one hand, and of reincarnation on the other. It is true that in Origen's teaching this reincarnation does not take place in the present world. He holds that there is to be a succession of worlds, in each of which the spirit will continue the process of training begun here, until at last, perfectly purified from sin, it will leave matter behind and enter its final form of existence as pure spirit. The later Church rejected this doctrine of a series of lives in successive worlds. In like manner it rejected the doctrine of pre-existence, confining immortality to the life that follows death. Finally, it extended immortality to all souls, the good and the evil alike, whereas in Greek thought immortality is confined to the good.

introducing those who pass its gates at once into the highest heaven or the lowest hell.

1. *Premillenarianism*

Of the three the first is the earliest in time. It is indeed the survival within Christianity of a type of thought about the future with which our study of the Jewish apocalyptic has already made us familiar. In these books, as we have seen, the early consciousness of God's presence with His people had faded. Hope was pushed forward into the future when by a stupendous miracle God would again intervene in the affairs of earth to reassert the supremacy which for the moment He seemed to have renounced, and inaugurate under the Messiah, His representative, the kingdom promised long ago.

The forms in which this future kingdom was pictured varied widely. Sometimes it was conceived in physical terms, as a continuation, under conditions miraculously heightening man's power of enjoyment, of the pleasures of sense which are for so many the *summum bonum* of their desire. Sometimes it was conceived in terms of spirit, and the contrast between this world and the next was emphasised. There were to be new heavens and a new earth, and the redeemed, transformed to correspond with their new environment, were to live an angelic existence to which their experience here afforded no parallel. And again, as in the doctrine of the Millennium, both conceptions were combined. The Advent was to inaugurate a preliminary kingdom on the earth, to be succeeded after a time, longer or shorter, by the final and heavenly state. But, whatever the variations in detail, all were agreed that there could be no hope of permanent progress or happiness during the present æon. The one fixed point to which expectation clung was the Advent. Before this, man was a stranger and an orphan, helpless himself, and unable to be of help to others.

A similar attitude reappears within Christianity in the type of thought we call premillenarianism.[1] The premillenarian, as the name implies, is one who expects the second Advent of Christ before the Millennium, and who, because of that fact, postpones till after the Advent all hope of true progress or prosperity.

Traces of this view meet us in the New Testament itself, though qualified, as we have seen, by other conceptions.[2] In the literature of the early Church it finds frequent expression. Among its representatives were men as eminent as Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian.[3] As in the

[1] It is important to distinguish between premillenarianism as a general type of thought with reference to the future, and the view of those who distinguish two stages in the coming of Christ's kingdom: a preliminary period of blessedness on earth, the Millennium in the technical sense, and the final consummation in heaven. The word is here used in the widest sense to include all who despair of progress in the present, and centre hope upon a miraculous transformation to be introduced at the Advent of Christ. A synonym of premillenarianism is Chiliasm, from the Greek χίλια, a thousand.

[2] The clearest example is the Millennium of Revelation, but it is not the only one. The tense expectation which vibrates in the early speeches of the Acts is evidence of a kindred spirit. Many sayings attributed to Jesus in the Synoptics (*e.g.* Mark ix. 1; Luke xxii. 14-18; Matthew xxiv. 27, and in general the Advent prophecy in Mark xiii. and parallels) lend themselves to this interpretation. Paul's description of the groaning and travailing of creation in Romans viii. and his warning words to the Thessalonians who, in their eager anticipation of Christ's coming, were neglecting present duty and falling into idleness and insubordination (2 Thess. iii. 11, 12), and indeed all the passages which emphasise the transitoriness of the present life and express a longing for the heavenly city which alone has permanent foundations—all these have been claimed by premillenarians as arguments for their own view. It is quite true that they do not represent the whole of the New Testament teaching. There is another side, even more important, which expresses the Christian's consciousness of the sanctity of the present life and the joy of communion with God here and now. But the former is more obvious to the superficial reader, and it was this aspect of the Christian hope which first received emphasis in history.

On the biblical evidence for premillenarianism cf. my article 'Millennium' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

[3] Justin, philosopher though he was, was a premillenarian of a very literal type. Asked by Trypho whether he really expected Jerusalem to be rebuilt, he answers in the affirmative. While admitting that many who belong to the pure and pious faith and are true Christians think otherwise, he declares that he and others 'who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead and a thousand years at Jerusalem which will then be rebuilt, adorned and enlarged as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare' (80). The anti-Gnostic fathers of the

Apocalypses of Judaism, it meets us now in a more literal, now in a more spiritual form. Papias, one of our earliest witnesses to the authorship of the Gospels, quotes as a genuine word of Christ a prediction which sets forth the remarkable fertility of the vine in the Messianic kingdom:

'The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand branches, and on each branch again ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall yield five and twenty measures of wine. And when any of the saints shall have taken hold of one of their clusters, another shall cry, I am a better cluster; take me, bless the Lord through me. Likewise also a grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand heads, and every head shall have ten thousand grains, and every grain ten pounds of fine flour, bright and clean, and the other fruits, seeds and the grass shall produce in similar proportions, and all the animals, using these fruits which are products of the soil, shall become in their turn peaceable and harmonious, obedient to man in all subjection.'[1]

Barnabas, on the other hand, emphasises the ethical and spiritual features of the future Kingdom. He looks for a millennium of rest, following the present six millenniums of work. This, he declares, will be the true Sabbath rest for which Christians look, a time when, having been themselves justified and having received the promise, they will be able to keep the Sabbath holy, because they have first been sanctified themselves (15. 1-7).

In both these forms, the more literal and the more spiritual, premillenarianism has lived on in the Church until this day. Though never the faith of the majority of Christians, it has drawn to itself in every age some of

close of the second century, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus, were all pronounced premillenarians. In their writings they give us full descriptions of the millenarian kingdom, and Tertullian wrote an entire book on the subject, which has unfortunately perished.

[1] Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 533

the most earnest and devout spirits in Christendom. It has a considerable literature, and is carrying on an active and not ineffective propaganda.

It is important, therefore, to understand what is the real basis of its appeal, and wherein its strength consists.

The grounds on which premillenarians rely to prove their case are two: first, a literal exegesis, and secondly, a pessimistic philosophy. The former is made more prominent in argument, but the latter is the underlying premise of their reasoning.

The first ground on which premillenarianism relies is a literal exegesis. It claims to be the only eschatology which does exact justice to the letter of Scripture, and it must be admitted that the claim is a plausible one. In the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, we have various prophecies concerning events in the future which can only be provided for by some such scheme as the premillenarians offer. There is to be an earthly kingdom at Jerusalem, the restoration of the scattered Jews to their own country, the destruction or conversion of the nations, the re-establishment of the temple ritual and of the Davidic monarchy. There is also to be a great catastrophe, signs and portents, in heaven and on the earth. The present order of things is to be transformed. Nature is to be renewed, the lion is to lie down with the lamb, and the wilderness blossom like the rose. Human nature, too, is to be changed. Disease will cease, and death itself be done away. How, we are asked, can all these things come to pass save by some series of miracles such as that for which the premillenarian looks?

But premillenarianism has a deeper root than this. Its ultimate appeal is to a pessimistic philosophy which banishes God from the present world, and despairs of any permanent progress by present methods. Thus, according to Dr. Andrews,[1] the fundamental sin of Christianity

[1] *Christianity and Anti-Christianity in their Final Conflict*, 2nd ed. New York, 1899.

is the rejection of the direct authority of Christ, and the enthronement in His stead of the false god, Humanity. This primitive apostasy Dr. Andrews puts very early—indeed, before the close of the Apostolic Age. To it he attributes ecclesiasticism in all its forms; for what is the Church as we know it but the attempt to substitute the rule of man for the rule of God? This perversion is not confined to Catholicism. Protestantism, too, has been guilty of it. Indeed Protestantism, through its greater humanitarianism, is more guilty, for it pushes God and His Christ still further into the background. All the boasted progress of our time, our charities and our philanthropies, our philosophy and our science, our Hague courts and our Parliaments of Religion, what are these but so many manifestations of the spirit of anti-Christ, which is Humanity enthroning itself upon the seat which belongs to God alone? From this evil, daily increasing, there is but one way of escape. Christ must return to earth, from which He has been banished, to subdue His enemies and to resume the throne from which He has been wrongly deposed.

Not all premillenarians would go as far as Dr. Andrews in his opposition to modern humanitarianism. Many of them are zealous workers in every good cause, and their positive contribution to social progress is far from negligible. Nevertheless, it is true of premillenarianism as a type of thought, that, so far as it is consistent, it is pessimistic in its judgment of the present age, and postpones all hope of permanent progress or betterment until after the Advent.

The statement of the arguments in favour of premillenarianism is at the same time the explanation of the reasons why it has failed to prove permanently satisfying. Neither in its interpretation of Scripture, nor in its interpretation of life, has it been able to command the assent of the great majority of Christians.

It has been unable to command assent to its interpretation of the Bible. To the early Christians, fresh from the experience of the Resurrection, it was natural to interpret Jesus' prophecy of His Advent literally, and to look for His coming in the immediate future. But with the passage of the years this attitude of eager expectation became increasingly difficult to maintain. Even from the beginning, as Justin admits, there were good Christians who held aloof from it. The extravagances of the Montanists who predicted the very day and hour of Christ's return and looked for the establishment of an earthly kingdom at Pepuza in Phrygia, served to discredit the movement with sober and fair-minded men. Above all, the growth of the allegorical exegesis in the older Church, and in more recent times the application of critical methods to the study of the Bible, have made possible a different interpretation of prophecy and so removed one of the foundations upon which premillenarianism rests.

Quite as momentous is the change which has taken place in our estimate of the present life. This change is the direct result of the growth of the influence of Christianity in the world. During the first and second centuries the Christians were a little group, without power or social prestige, yet their ideal involved the reorganisation of society according to the principles of Jesus Christ. How was it possible to imagine such a result under present conditions? How else could it conceivably take place than in some such way as premillenarianism anticipated? But, by the fourth century after Christ, conditions had radically changed. Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Church was an institution powerful enough already to exercise a profound influence upon social conditions, and every year growing more powerful. Under the circumstances, it was not strange if men's thought should have turned from the future to the present, and the Millennium, hitherto post-

poned to the Advent of Christ, have been identified with the reign of the Church on earth.[1]

2. *Purgatory*

This double change is the background against which we must set the second type of thought to be considered, that namely which meets us in the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. This differs from the premillenarian view in three respects: (1) in the subordination of the social to the individual aspect of the Christian hope; (2) in the shifting of emphasis from the Advent to the state of the soul immediately after death; (3) in the importance assigned to the Church as mediator of the future salvation.

There is no surer way to gain an insight into Catholic thought and feeling concerning the life after death than through a reading of the great poem in which Dante has described his visit to the other world.[2] Let us follow the poet on his journey and see for ourselves what he saw.

The first thing that strikes us is the great variety of the prospect. It is not one country which he visits, but three —Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise—and each has its own divisions and subdivisions. Over the portals of the first we meet the famous legend: 'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.' It is the abode of those who are finally lost. Paradise, on the other hand, or heaven as we should say, is the home of the angels and of the saints, those who have finally conquered in the battle with sin, and who now, in the presence of God and of Christ, enjoy the rewards of their victory. And between the two lies Purgatory, an intermediate region in which those who are neither perfectly good nor hopelessly bad work out the consequences of their former sins, and are gradually fitted by discipline, more or less painful, for the blessed life of heaven.

[1] So by Augustine in his *City of God*, xx. 7-9.
[2] The *Divine Comedy*, English translation with notes by Norton.

Each of these realms, I repeat, has its divisions and its subdivisions. Hell consists of nine concentric circles, one below the other, at the bottom of which Lucifer, Prince of Evil, lies embedded in a lake of ice up to his waist. In the first circle are the souls of the ancient poets and sages who died without knowledge of the historic Christ. They suffer no pain save such as is involved in desire without hope.[1] Here in the pre-Christian days the patriarchs and prophets of the old dispensation had their abode until delivered from it by Christ, during the fateful visit which He made to the underworld between His Crucifixion and His Resurrection.

Beneath this we find in successive circles different groups of sinners, arranged according to the heinousness of their sin. In the second circle are the carnal, then the gluttonous, the avaricious and prodigal, the wrathful, the heretics, the violent, the fraudulent, and finally, in the lowest circle, which contains Lucifer himself, the traitors: all, in short, who have departed this life in mortal sin. Each in his own compartment, or sub-compartment, receives the special punishment which is appropriate to his own particular sin. The carnal are hurried along by a resistless hurricane. The gluttonous are ceaselessly drenched with rain and hail. The avaricious wheel weights back and forth; the heresiarchs are buried in coffins with the followers whom they have deluded, and so on in endless succession.

As Hell consists of a pit opening circle after circle, each lower than the other, so Purgatory is a mountain rising in a series of ledges one above the other, in the arduous ascent toward Paradise. Here, too, we find the same gradations of merit and demerit, the same exact balancing of punishment and crime. At the foot of the mountain, the so-called ante-Purgatory, are the spirits who have died in contumacy, or who for one reason or another have postponed repentance until too late. Then on successive

[1] *Inferno*, iv. p. 23.

ledges are the proud, the envious, the wrathful, the slothful, the avaricious, the gluttonous, and finally, nearest the top, the lustful, each undergoing the purification which is fitted to cleanse them from their sin. The wrathful contemplate visions of forbearance, the lustful cry aloud the names of those who have been chaste, the slothful run to atone for their former negligence, and as they run they cry, 'Swift, swift, that time be not lost by little love, so that zeal in well-doing may make grace green again.' [1]

Even in Paradise, whither the poet penetrates at last, we find the same gradations of state, the same exact balancing of merit. Some spirits dwell in the moon, others in the successive planets. Only the most favoured reach the Empyrean where is the great rose of Paradise, and share the beatific vision which God reserves for His greatest saints. Yet, there is this difference between Paradise and the regions below, that in heaven these differences of state cause no envy. Each in his own place, high or low, is perfectly content. To Dante this is a great mystery till Piccarda, the moon spirit, imparts to him the secret.

'Brother, virtue of charity quiets our will, and makes us wish only for that which we have, and quickens not our thirst for aught else. If we desired to be more on high, our desires would be discordant with the will of Him who assigns us here, which thou wilt see is not possible in these circles, if to exist in charity is here of necessity and if thou dost well consider its nature. Nay, it is the essence of this blessed existence to hold itself within the divine will, whereby our wills themselves are made one. So that as we are, from seat to seat throughout this realm, to all the realm is pleasing, as to the King who inwills us with His will; and His will is our peace; it is that sea whereunto everything is moving which It creates and which nature makes.' [2]

With variations in detail which for our present purpose are negligible, the hope of Dante is still the hope of Catholic

[1] *Purgatorio*, xviii. p. 140. [2] *Paradiso*, iii. p. 22.

Christianity.[1] It is instructive, therefore, to notice wherein it differs from the premillenarian ideal which it succeeds.

Of the shifting of interest from the more distant to the nearer scene we have already spoken. The attention of the premillenarian is fixed upon the Advent, and the condition of the individual during the intermediate state is ignored, or at most, lightly touched upon. To the Catholic the life immediately after death stands in the foreground, and the fate of the soul in its painful struggle upward and onward engrosses attention. If heaven is to be attained at all, it will be by most men only after a long and arduous journey. And it is only natural that the traveller should be most concerned for his lodgings during the stages that lie nearest.

More important is the contrast in the view of the goal itself. For the premillenarian this is a new social order introduced by a great miracle and requiring for its realisation a transformation of the external environment. For the Catholic it is an inner experience involving complete freedom from sin, and culminating in the supreme blessedness of the vision of God.[2] This vision, indeed, cannot be described, but only experienced. Only the greatest saints attain to it, and they cannot translate what their eyes have seen into words.

'As is he who dreaming sees, and after the dream the passion remains imprinted, and the rest returns not to the mind, such am I; for my vision almost wholly departs, while the sweetness that was born of it yet distils within my heart.

[1] This does not apply, of course, to the details of Dante's imagery, but only to the main lines of his teaching, *e.g.* (1) The division of the future life into Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven; (2) The Doctrine of Limbo; (3) The difference in the degrees of bliss or of suffering in each; (4) the exact balancing of merit and reward; (5) the mystic ideal of the beatific vision as constituting the supreme bliss of the saints. In all this, as in much else, Dante is a true Catholic.

[2] I do not mean, of course, that these elements are absent from the premillenarian ideal, but that they are secondary, not primary.

Thus the snow is by the sun unsealed; thus by the wind, on the light leaves, was lost the saying of the Sibyl.'[1]

Protestants often fail in their appreciation of Catholic piety because they ignore this aspect of the Catholic ideal. No one can do justice to Dante's version of the Christian hope whose reading stops with the *Purgatorio*. Side by side with the complex machinery of punishment provided for the discipline of the imperfect there is an inner pathway of the spirit open to the pure in heart. To them, even in this life, the promise is fulfilled that they shall see God, and at death they pass at once to the heaven which He has reserved for those who love Him.

But those who find this path are few in number. To most men salvation comes only through painful discipline, and between them and the heaven which is the ultimate goal of their hope lies the weary ascent of the *Purgatorio*.

How came this way to be discovered? What causes led to the replacement of the early Christian hope by the new doctrine of Purgatory? Among the many different influences at work, only one need be referred to here, namely, the growth of the disciplinary power of the Church as exercised through the sacramental system.

We learn from Augustine's *Confessions* what an impression was produced upon inquiring spirits sensitive to the changes and evils of the time by the Catholic Church. In the midst of distress and confusion, inner and outer, that majestic institution, already inspiring in its antiquity, and through its appropriation of the Old Testament carrying back its origin to the dawn of human history, stood out as the one unchanging fact. The Church was God's spokesman in time, and the mediator of His salvation. It was no longer necessary to wait for the future to commune with God. Here and now He was present in the institu-

[1] *Paradiso*, xxxiii. p. 254.

tion which was His appointed representative, the custodian of His truth, and the channel of His grace. Through baptism the guilt of sin was blotted out. In the Eucharist man could partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. By penance a way of escape was provided from the guilt of sins committed after baptism. In the course of the later centuries the sacramental system was further developed until it touched human life at all points and made provision for every form of human need. So the machinery was brought into existence by which in case of need God's grace could reach across the grave and be made available for those who had died in sin.

To understand the bearing of this change upon the conception of the life after death, we must recall the Catholic view of the process of salvation here. While its goal, as we have seen, is the salvation of the soul from sin, its machinery is especially designed to deal with the consequences of sin in penalty. It is a complex process through which little by little, through satisfaction and penance, the guilt of sins committed after baptism [1] is atoned for, and the way opened for the ultimate entrance of the soul into heaven.[2]

The bearing of this conception upon the future life is clear. The soul which enters the other world before the process of purification is complete must finish that process

[1] In Catholic theory baptism removes the guilt of Adam's sin, but it is left for penance to deal with the guilt incurred for sins committed after baptism.

[2] The history of this legalistic conception of salvation need not detain us here. Suffice it to say that as a result of a series of influences, some internal and some external, the Pauline conception of salvation as a life of present communion with God through vital union with the living Christ was replaced by the conception of salvation as remission of future penalty on the basis of a substitutionary atonement. The Germanic law made men familiar with the idea of satisfaction (*i.e.* money payments calculated on a basis of equivalence as a substitute for punishment). Anselm, in his *Cur Deus Homo*, formulated the philosophy of this new conception of salvation, and the sacraments of the Church, above all, penance, with the indulgence system, which was its logical extension, furnished the machinery by which its benefits were made practically effective to those who needed them.

there, and the doctrine of Purgatory is the natural result. Purgatory is simply the extension to the life after death of the principles which determine the Catholic ideal for the life here.

What shall we say of this new form of the Christian hope? How far is it adequate and satisfying?

We note, in the first place, the extraordinary vividness which the belief in Purgatory gives to the thought of the future. It is indissolubly connected with the present life. There is no break in the continuity. The discipline begun here is completed there. The guilt incurred here meets there with its deserved penalty. No doubt to many thoughtful Catholics the language of the *Purgatorio* and the *Inferno* is symbolic, but the symbols are symbols of reality. For the devout Catholic the world to come is never negligible. The thought of what it may contain for him and for those he loves is his constant companion.

Nor can it be denied that for many the influence is a salutary one. It is an incentive to watchfulness and a warning against sloth. When a man is tempted to sin, there is ever present the thought of the inevitable penalty which sin brings with it.

Even more significant is the close relationship which it establishes between the living and the dead. It is characteristic of the Catholic belief, as we have seen, that the power of the Church extends to Purgatory, and through her good offices invoked on behalf of the dead by the living, the period of probation may be shortened and the pains of the suffering soul mitigated. This opens the way to the satisfaction of one of the deepest of human instincts, the longing for communion with the loved ones who have passed away. Catholicism not only claims to give information as to the state of the dead; it provides the machinery for helping them at the point of their direst need.[1]

[1] *E.g.* through masses and indulgences for the dead. Cf. Wilhelm and Scannell: *A Manual of Catholic Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 463, 480.

But these advantages are balanced by disadvantages of the most serious kind. The power thus claimed for the Church is so great as to invite abuse, and in fact it has been abused in the most shameful way. The practice of indulgences, growing up naturally as the development of the penitential system, speedily developed into an agency of superstition and tyranny.[1] It was interpreted as a licence to commit sin. It was used as a means of extortion. Under the exploitation of men like Tetzel it developed into a scandal so flagrant as to arouse the indignation of Luther. The Reformation was the answer of Protestantism to the Church that administered the authority it claimed over the dead by methods so unworthy. With the abuses of the indulgence system it swept away also the underlying faith to which it appealed. It rejected Purgatory as well as Penance and the Mass. We have to consider finally the substitute by which it replaced it.

3. *Instant Sanctification at Death*

The distinctive feature of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory is the extension of discipline to the life after death. The contention of Protestantism, on the other hand, has been that discipline ceases with death. The destiny of the soul for weal or woe is settled here and now, and death introduces man at once, as the case may be, into the pains of Hell or the bliss of Heaven.

We may take as an example the statement of the Westminster Confession :—

'The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep),

[1] On the history of the indulgence system, cf. Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. iii. Cf. also *Catholic Encyclopædia*, article 'Indulgencies'; Wilhelm and Scannell, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 477 *sq.* An indulgence, it must be remembered, is not a licence to commit sin, but the remission, in whole or in part, of the temporal punishment of sin.

having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.' (xxxii. 1.)

What a contrast to the vision in the *Divine Comedy*! The nine circles of Hell and the seven ledges of Purgatory have disappeared. Even in Heaven one star differeth not from another star in glory; for all alike occupy the highest heaven and behold the face of God.[1]

How shall we account for this transformation? What has happened to blot out all the intermediate tints in the picture and dyed the brush of the painter with so dazzling a white, and so uncompromising a black?

We may find our answer suggested by the adjective with which we have phrased the question. We have the reflection here of the uncompromising spirit of the Reformation, facing the momentous questions of the soul in the spirit of Ibsen's Brand with his 'Nought or all.' The Reformation was the effort to restore Christianity to its pristine purity. Born of immediate personal experience, it claimed for the humblest believer the same freshness and certainty which great spirits like Luther had enjoyed. It banished the hierarchy and proclaimed the universal priesthood of believers, and the same parity of rights and experiences which it tried to establish here, it carried over into its thought of the life immediately after death. There, too, as well as here, there were to be no intermediaries, but each soul would receive its desert for good or evil directly from the hand of its Creator.

[1] It is to be noted that for the Protestant, too, the highest ideal is the beatific vision. His criticism of Catholicism has reference not to the goal, but the path by which it is reached.

There was tonic in the thought. For strong men it was inspiring to feel that they stood on the verge of the final experience. It was refreshing to know that whatever trials this life might still hold, a few years would end all uncertainty and bring the utmost fruition of desire. Men like Calvin, Knox, and Cromwell could face misfortunes with an even mind because they were conscious of their own election by God.

But what of those who were not elect? Here, indeed, the prospect was one of unrelieved gloom. When once the play was over and the curtain had been rung down, there was no longer any hope for those who had died in sin. Jonathan Edwards has pictured in unforgettable language the fate which Protestant orthodoxy predicted for those who were finally impenitent. Not only were they cut off from the grace of God, but they were deprived of the sympathy of men.

'You that have godly parents,' he says, pleading with the impenitent among his Northampton parishioners,

'who in this world have tenderly loved you, who were wont to look upon your welfare as their own, and were wont to be grieved for you when anything calamitous befell you in this world, and especially were greatly concerned for the good of your souls, industriously sought, and earnestly prayed for your salvation, how will you bear to see them . . . now without any love to you, approving the sentence of condemnation, when Christ shall with indignation bid you depart, wretched, cursed creatures, into eternal burnings? How will you bear to see and hear them praising the Judge for His justice exercised in pronouncing this sentence, and hearing it with holy joy in their countenances, and shouting forth the praises and hallelujahs of God and Christ on that account? . . . You that have godly husbands or wives or brethren or sisters, with whom you have been wont to dwell under the same roof, and to eat at the same table, consider how it will be with you when you shall come to part with them; when they shall be taken and you left. . . . However you may wail and lament

when you see them parted from you . . . you will see in them no signs of sorrow that you are not taken with them.'[1]

What room is left here for the alternations of hope and fear with which the Catholic contemplates the fate of those dear to him in the other world? From the fires of Purgatory there was at least hope of escape, but now no such refuge remains. Dante's mountain has vanished, and only heaven and hell remain, and what is more significant, with Purgatory have vanished all the sentiments and emotions to which its presence led. In the heat of the divine judgment, glorious as it is terrible, the springs of natural affection have been dried up.

We have come a long way from the primitive hope with which we started, the eschatology of the Resurrection and of the second Advent. These doctrines, to be sure, still retain their place in the Creed, but they no longer hold the centre of interest. If at death, as the Westminster Standards assert, the righteous enter the highest heavens, while the wicked are plunged into the lowest hell, it is difficult to see what new experience can be added by the resurrection of the body for which they still wait. The dead may still rise for judgment, but the purpose of their summons to the bar is simply to make public a decision which has been rendered long ago—and what is more important still—which is already in process of execution.

In recent times there has been increasing dissatisfaction among thoughtful Protestants with the traditional eschatology. It has been felt that in their protest against the abuses of Catholicism the Reformers went too far, and various attempts have been made to restore to Protestant theology those elements of truth in the Catholic faith which have been too lightly sacrificed. This attempt has taken different forms. Sometimes Peter's words about the spirits in prison have been taken as the point of departure, and we have a revival of Dante's teaching concerning the

[1] Sermon xiii. (*Works*, New York, 1869, vol. iv. pp. 296-7).

mission of Christ to the souls in the under-world. Theologians of Arminian and semi-Arminian tendencies have extended the time of probation beyond the grave, and taught that those who have never heard of Christ in this life will be given an opportunity of repentance and faith in the life to come. Others, while confining regeneration to this life, have taught a progressive sanctification after death, which makes room in the other world for differences of character and of development no less marked than those which meet us here.[1]

Nor has criticism of the older eschatology been confined to the intermediate steps in the process of salvation. The goal itself has been called in question. In the traditional eschatology, both Catholic and Protestant, this has been defined, in individualistic fashion, as the immediate vision of God. Heaven has been thought of as a place of rest rather than of activity, of fruition rather than of service. To many modern thinkers such a view seems to overlook the essential elements in Jesus' teaching. The God He reveals is the Father of many brethren, and the kingdom for which He looks, a new social order in which service will have place as well as worship. There is a truth here for which premillenarianism stood, to which the later eschatology has done scant justice. This forgotten aspect of truth it is the effort of recent writers to recover. Thus in various ways the rigidity of the older doctrine is being modified, and room is sought for a freer treatment more in accordance with the spirit of the age.

But before we consider this latest phase in the history of the Christian hope there is a preliminary question which requires our attention, so far-reaching in its importance as to take precedence of all matters of detail. This is the question whether life after death is possible in any form, and to this we now turn.

[1] *E.g.* Dr. Charles A. Briggs; cf. his *Church Unity*, New York, 1909, p. 350 *sq.*

CHAPTER IX

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTES FOR THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

In Leibnitz' *Theodicée*, the famous essay in which the philosopher gives his solution of the problem of evil, there is a passage in which he speaks of Jesus as the Teacher who brought to the common consciousness of mankind the truths of natural religion. Among these truths was immortality. Moses, while holding the belief, failed to include it in his public teaching. It remained a kind of esoteric doctrine until Jesus brought it out into the clear light, and made it the assured possession of all men.[1]

The attitude of Leibnitz was typical of the age.[2] Rigorous though they were in their criticism of supernatural religion, the deists never questioned the fact of immortality. With the existence of God and the authority of the moral law, it was a fixed point in their scheme of things. Kant reckons it with God and freedom as one of the three ideas whose validity the practical reason supports. It was the premise upon which Butler relied in his argument in support of revealed religion.[3]

How different the situation to-day! In his lectures on *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, George Adam Smith refers to the widespread loss

[1] Leibnitz, *Works*, edited Gerhardt, Berlin, 1885, vol. vi. p. 26.
[2] The *Theodicée* was written in 1710.
[3] Hume's scepticism, to be sure, did not spare even belief in immortality. But his case was exceptional. Cf. M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant*; 1911, p. 241 *sq.*

of faith in immortality as one of the grounds which reinforce the appeal of the Old Testament to modern men.[1] We find in the pages of Isaiah and of Micah a situation not unlike that which faces us to-day when men of sincere faith in God and of high ethical purpose have no hope which goes beyond the present life. It was a situation which passed away with the rise of faith in the resurrection, and which has not recurred until comparatively recent times.

How has the change come about? What causes have shaken the faith which has maintained itself unbroken for more than two thousand years? And, above all, what substitutes are proposed to replace the hope which is challenged? These are the questions to which the present chapter will be devoted.

1. *The Decline of Faith in Personal Immortality*

And first, of the causes of the recent decline of faith in immortality. They are a part of the complex movement which we call modern thought, which at so many points has been reconstructing our view of the world in which we live, and which has led to the challenge of the Christian faith all along the line.

For one thing, modern science has profoundly altered our conception of the physical structure of the universe. The earth is no longer for us a flat surface with the firmament above and the under-world below. The boundaries of the universe have enormously expanded. We recognise that our earth is but one of the planets of a sun which, vast as it is, is but one of an innumerable company of stars. What place is there in such a world for the heaven and hell of Dante's imagery? Where shall we locate the circles of the *Inferno* or the ledges of the *Purgatorio*?

But, great as are the changes in the geography of the

[1] P. 209 *sq.*

universe, the changes in our chronology are even greater. Instead of inhabiting a world which began at a fixed point of time, created by God in six days of twenty-four hours, and having a history which can be compressed into six thousand years, our thought ranges backward and forward through unnumbered ages without finding any stopping-place. We see the whirling gases which constitute the raw material of worlds contracting into suns, and these suns throwing off planets which in turn cool until they reach a temperature capable of supporting life. We see species appearing, one after another, in the vegetable kingdom and in the animal. We behold a ruthless struggle for existence, in which the weak go to the wall. We see the same struggle repeating itself in human history, race contending with race for the mastery, and individual with individual. Civilisation succeeds civilisation, and philosophy philosophy. New religions rise upon the ruins of the faiths which have preceded them; and within each the old lives on in new forms and under different names. The accepted formulæ of the past no longer do justice to the complexity of the phenomena. The lines that used to mark off period from period, and age from age, are blurred. All seems in a state of flux.

Nor is it otherwise with the inner life. Indeed, here we meet the greatest change of all. The same methods which have rewritten our history have revolutionised our psychology. When we study the processes of the mind, we find the same law of cause and effect at work. The development without is marked by a corresponding development within. Instead of one self, modern psychology discovers many selves. Each moment, indeed, creates its own self, if not a 'new and unique self,' to use Mr. Henry Rutgers Marshall's[1] striking language—at least, a self differing in some respects from all that have gone before, and from all that will follow after. Plato's

[1] *Consciousness*, p. 622.

soul, the simple substance that abides unchanged in the midst of change, seems to have vanished for ever.

More startling still in its effects upon the Christian hope is the intimate connection discerned between soul and body. It is an axiom of our modern psychology that each change in the mental state has its parallel in some corresponding change in the nervous system. The health of the mind and the health of the body seem indissolubly connected. A clot of blood pressing upon a certain spot in the brain may change a kind and upright man into a morose and brutal one, and conversely, a successful operation may bring about a moral regeneration incapable of production by any other means. It is not strange that men whose lives have been given to the study of such phenomena should confine consciousness to the present life, and regard the conception of a disembodied spirit as a contradiction in terms.

These tendencies are reinforced by the breaking down of the older conception of religious authority. The same influences which have been at work in secular history have made themselves felt in religion as well. The conception of the Bible as an inerrant book, consistent in its teaching from cover to cover, equally authoritative for history and science as for ethics and religion, has been replaced for many by the new view which sees in it the record of a progressive revelation. Helpful as the change has been in many respects, there can be no doubt that one of its effects has been to weaken the authority of the older dogma, and in the case of those whose faith is insecurely grounded, to open the way to a far-reaching scepticism.

Nor have the causes of the change been intellectual merely. Ethical influences also have been at work. There has been a shifting of interest from the future to the present. The marvellous achievements of modern science have made the world more interesting than ever before. The great increase in wealth and comfort has multiplied

the number of those who feel so much at home on earth that they have little time or energy left to think of heaven. The idea of progress, with its promise of a constantly improving future, has made work for others better worth while than ever before, and questions as to the distant future have lost their interest.

Sometimes, indeed, the opposite motive has been at work. The spectacle of human misery, all the more keenly felt because of the splendid achievements with which it is contrasted, has kindled men's desire for immediate relief. They have been unwilling to postpone to the future the help which is needed now, and have regarded the Church's promise of immortality as an unworthy palliative, designed to make men content with conditions against which they ought rather to rise in protest.

Such are some of the motives which have produced the revolution of thought which this chapter is designed to record. The effects are patent to every open-eyed observer. In his well-known Ingersoll Lecture on *Human Immortality* [1] Professor William James begins by explaining that he wishes some one else had been chosen to render the service, some one whose 'personal feeling' about the future life was 'of the keenest order,' for, as for him, he frankly confesses that 'among the subjects which give his mind solicitude, this one does not take the very foremost place.' Could there be a more striking indication of the change of mood which has come over our age than that William James, that most human of all philosophers, should approach this topic, so vital to multitudes of his fellow mortals, in so unimpassioned a mood?

But indeed we do not need to turn to philosophers for our evidence. It meets us on every hand, in quiet conversation with familiar friends, at the bedside of the sick, in the Christian Church, by the open grave. From the most unexpected quarters, and at the most unlooked for

[1] Boston, 1898, p. 3.

times, we discover how many there are from whose lives this great hope has gone out. Sometimes indifferently, more often with heavy hearts, they will tell us of some dear friend who has gone that they never expect to see him again. The glad confidence which has lightened the separation for so many in the past is no longer theirs.

What is to be the effect of this change? Is it only a passing phase, or will it last, and, if so, what will be its consequences for good or for evil? Will it leave life permanently impoverished, or can some substitute be found which will preserve the values of the old hope even when its substance is gone? Three such substitutes have actually been proposed. The first is social immortality, the second, the immortality of influence, the third, the immortality of value.

2. *Social Immortality*

An example of the first substitute is the ideal of the more radical socialists.[1] These men abandon the world to come altogether, and concentrate their attention upon the present life. Here, they tell us, is to be found the only salvation of which we have any certainty. The part of the wise and the good is therefore to let the other world go, and to concentrate every effort upon the reconstruction of the present social order.

There is indeed no necessary connection between socialism and the denial of immortality. Socialism is an economic programme, and concerns itself with the equitable distribution of wealth. It is based upon certain theories as to capital and wages which have been formulated by Karl Marx, and adopted with more or less modification by his followers. It is quite possible to hold these theories and still believe in God and immortality. In-

[1] A well-selected bibliography of socialistic literature is given by Hall in his *Social Solutions*, 1910, pp. 377-81.

deed, one might accept the socialistic state as the ideal for this life, and yet postpone its complete realisation to another world.

This is the position which is taken by those who call themselves Christian Socialists. They see in the socialistic theory an effort to apply Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom of God to the conditions of life here. They find inspiration in their struggle for social and economic reconstruction in His teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God, and compensation for the slow progress made toward the realisation of their ideal in faith in that life beyond in which the hopes unfulfilled here will have their final fruition.

Our interest here, however, is with the radicals who do not share this faith. For them the horizon is bounded by the present life. Religion in the conventional form is looked upon with suspicion because of its other-worldly character. It is represented as a device for making men content with injustice and oppression. Through its inculcation of submission to authority, it is an obstacle to that class consciousness through which alone the better social order can be introduced. I have heard Bebel, before a great audience which cheered him to the echo, attack Christianity as the chief foe to social progress, and plead with the mothers of the future citizens to emancipate themselves from the tyranny of the Church. For the city of God, which has so long deluded men with false promises, this advocate of a new social order would offer us as a substitute the city of man.

There are many who do not accept the economic doctrines of socialism who sympathise with this point of view. What may be in store for man after death they do not know. But they know that this world is full of preventable wrongs, and they believe that it is man's first duty and his highest happiness to see that these wrongs are righted. They claim Jesus as authority for their attitude. They

remind us that He coupled with His prayer for the coming of God's kingdom the petition that God's will should be done on earth as in heaven. They take Matthew xxv. very seriously, and find in the struggle against poverty, sickness, and oppression a sufficient outlet for all their energies. Like the author of Second Peter, they hope for 'a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Peter iii. 13).

There is much that is noble in this attitude. It represents the natural reaction against a one-sided religion. It emphasises anew aspects of Jesus' Gospel which should never have been forgotten. It is a question, however, whether it can prove permanently satisfying.

What shall we say, for example, of all those individuals who have died before the coming of the new social order? This is a very pressing question. The world is full of underfed, imperfectly developed men and women, cripples physically and morally, the victims of the social maladjustment which socialism and its allied reforms are trying to abolish. No doubt it will be a splendid thing to bring about such a state of affairs that there will be no more suffering and no more sin, but what are we to do in the meantime? These people are here to-day. What can we do for them? The old Gospel had a message of hope for the most unfortunate of humanity. It promised him a future life in which he might fulfil the destiny which he had failed to realise here. It assured him that as a child of God he was heir to the Kingdom, and so gave dignity to the most trying fate. For this promise the earthly hope provides no substitute.

Or, let us suppose the ideal realised. The efforts of reform have finally succeeded, and the perfect social order has been established. Still, we must face the uncertainty which is involved in all earthly existence. Scientists tell us that the earth, which has been formed by the gradual cooling of molten matter to a temperature capable of

supporting life, will some day be resolved into its elements, carrying with it to destruction all the complex life which it has produced. What, then, will become of the ideal society, which has been brought into existence at the cost of so much labour? It too, like the greater system of which it is a part, will have had its day and ceased to be.

Or, if this contingency seem too remote to trouble the imagination of practical men, how shall we deal with the problem presented by the brevity of individual life? Even under the best conditions life is transitory, and the most that can be crowded into it falls lamentably short of the capacities of the human spirit to acquire and to enjoy. The sense of incompleteness which makes so much of the tragedy of our life here will still be present under the new conditions, enhanced, if anything, by the greater opportunities they present. Here again the Christian hope had its solution to offer, but what remedy can be found for this discrepancy between individual capacity and individual attainment in a purely earthly ideal?

3. *The Immortality of Influence*

We are led therefore to consider the second of the proposed substitutes for the Christian hope, that namely of the immortality of influence. According to this view the individual, while ceasing to exist as a separate self-consciousness, continues after death to live on in the effects for good or evil which he produces in the lives of those who come after him. In Ibsen's great play, *The Pretenders*, there is a famous scene which describes the death of Nicholas, Bishop of Oslo, who lived in Norway in the thirteenth century. A restless and grasping spirit, he has sown dissension between the rival claimants for the Norwegian throne, and, unsuccessful himself, has found his satisfaction in preventing others from attaining the power which he himself has failed to win. With the approach

of death, however, he sees his plans imperilled and the work of his life threatened with shipwreck. He pleads with his physician in vain for an extension of life. 'The miserable hound,' he exclaims, 'what boots all his learning when he cannot add an hour to my life? There sits he in his closet day by day, piecing together his cunning wheels and weights and levers; he thinks to fashion a machine that shall go and go and never stop—*perpetuum mobile* he calls it. Why not rather turn his art and his skill to making man such a *perpetuum mobile*?' At the words he stops and thinks; then his eyes light up with a sudden flash of insight. '*Perpetuum mobile*,' he continues, 'I am not strong in Latin—but it means somewhat that has power to work eternally, through all the ages. If I myself, now, could but—— That were a deed to end my life withal! That were to do my greatest deed in my latest hour! To set wheel and weight and lever at work in the King's soul and the Duke's; to set them agoing so that no power on earth can stop them; if I can but do that, then shall I live indeed, live in my work—and, when I think of it, mayhap 'tis that which is called immortality.'[1]

Here we have a singularly forceful illustration of what is called the immortality of influence. Not many men would wish the particular kind of immortality which satisfied Bishop Nicholas. Most men prefer George Eliot's kind of immortality, and if they desire to live at all, would live 'in lives made better by their presence.' But there is no doubt that in this thought of self-perpetuation in other lives many earnest spirits have found and are finding to-day a compensation for the loss of the old hope.

Such, for example, is the solace offered by Professor Münsterberg in his suggestive book, *The Eternal Life*.[2] Answering the charge that he does not believe in immortality because, unlike the one for whom the book is

[1] *The Pretenders*, edited Archer, Act iii. p. 210.
[2] Boston, 1905.

written, he never expects to meet again the friend whose untimely death they both mourn, he thus expresses his own faith in the immortality of influence :—

'Who dares to speak the word "uncompleted"? Are the influences of our will confined to those impulses which work directly and with our knowledge on the nearest circle of our neighbours? Will not our friend, who left us in the best energy of his manhood, influence you and me and so many others throughout our lives, and what we gained from his noble mind—will it not work through us further and further, and may it not thus complete much of that which seemed broken off so uncompleted?'[1]

We have here a modern rendering of Bishop Nicholas's *perpetuum mobile*.

It cannot be denied that these words express a great truth. Personality is self-perpetuating. We live in the lives we have helped to create.

There is a passage in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* which admirably illustrates this influence of spirit upon spirit. It was during his editorship of the *Westminster Review*. He had been throwing himself with all the energy of his generous nature into various causes of social and ethical reform, when all of a sudden he found himself the prey of a singular depression of spirit. 'It occurred to me,' he says, 'to put the question directly to myself: suppose that all your objects in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to could be completely effected at this very instant, would this be a great joy and happiness to you? And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, No. At this my heart sank within me, and the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. . . . I seemed to have nothing left to live for.'[2] For some time this mood continued; but little by little he succeeded in throwing off his depression, and recovering

[1] P. 66. [2] *Autobiography*, p. 183.

his lost interest in life. Among the influences which helped to bring about this salutary change he mentions as one of the chief, the reading of Wordsworth's poems. Through Wordsworth he discovered the world of value to which poetry and religion alike hold the key. He felt the

> 'sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
> And rolls through all things.'

And with the experience there came to him a new contentment, 'a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind.' He learned, in short, 'what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed.' [1]

It is so with all the great teachers of humanity. Their influence transcends the bounds of time and space. Whatever may be true in the unseen country toward which we are journeying, certain it is that here we can commune with the great spirits of the past, 'Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, or Homer.' Martineau tells us that with his discovery of Plato he experienced what he can only describe as 'a new intellectual birth.' [2] When Kant read Hume it waked him from his dogmatic slumbers. Who that has been at Hampton but has felt the influence of General Armstrong? What lover of humanity but feels

[1] *Autobiography*, p. 148.
[2] *Types of Ethical Theory*, Preface, p. xiii.

himself sustained in his struggle by the thought of Lincoln and of Mazzini ?

It is so supremely with the great leaders of religion. Paul's word about Christ, ' It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me,' has been verified in countless lives. Confucius lives on in the lives of Chinamen, and Mohammed, of Mohammedans. Augustine and Luther and Calvin and Wesley are still forces actually working for the ends they had proposed for themselves hundreds of years ago. Bishop Nicholas is right. Death is not the end but the beginning of influence, and personality is the true *perpetuum mobile.*

But when we have said this, we have not reached the end of the matter. How comes man to exert so far-reaching an influence ? What is the nature of this personality that can work without end ? If consciousness can produce such great results during the few years alloted to it here, why may it not be possible that it is still exerting similar influence under conditions hidden from our ken ? Why, in other words, need the immortality of influence be a substitute for personal immortality in the full Christian sense ? Why may it not rather be its supplement and its evidence ?

The question is certainly a legitimate one. But before we attempt to answer it, there is still a third possibility which demands our attention. Besides the two substitutes for personal immortality already considered, a third is proposed. We may call it the immortality of value.

4. *The Immortality of Value*

According to this view, the significance of life consists not in what we do but in what we mean. Each life is the expression of some purpose, some desire, some ideal. This ideal may never be realised in experience, or, if at all, most imperfectly. It has its value in itself, independent

of time and of all consciousness that is temporally conditioned. Time is the mark of finiteness and imperfection, characteristic indeed of all human consciousness, but without place in the eternal mind of God. Within his all-embracing intuition all human meanings are contained and fulfilled. Each human life in its ideal aspect is an object of the divine thought, a part of the divine experience, a necessary element in the totality of values which constitutes the divine blessedness, and in this fact its immortality consists.

It is not easy for most of us, creatures of time as we are, to rise to the somewhat rarified atmosphere where this ideal has its home. Let me therefore try to make my meaning clearer by an illustration. A little while ago I cited Münsterberg as an example of the immortality of influence. The paragraph that immediately follows gives us a good illustration of the immortality of value.

He has been speaking, you remember, of the influence which his friend continues to exert after death as 'completing much of that which seemed broken off.' 'And yet,' he goes on, 'who dares to speak the word, completed? Do not our purposes grow, does not . . . every new significance which our will reaches aim towards new influences? Does not every newly created value give us the desire for further achievement? . . . Is our life-work really ever so completely done that no desire has still a meaning?'

What follows from this haunting sense of incompleteness that seems the very law of our life in time? This clearly, that the true meaning of our life is not to be found in time at all. 'In eternity lies the reality of our friend who will never sit with us again here at the fireplace. I do not think that I should love him better if I hoped that he might be somewhere waiting through time and space to meet us again. I feel that I should take his existence in the space-time world as the real meaning of his life, and thus deprive his noble personality of every value and of

every meaning. The man we love was not in space and time. . . . He lived his life in realising absolute values through his devotion to truth and beauty, to morality and religion. You and I do not know a reality of which he is not in eternity a noble part. The passing of time cannot make his personality unreal, and nothing would be added to his immortal value if some object like him were to enter the sphere of time again' (pp. 67-69).

Here again we may readily assume that there is a truth in this doctrine of the immortality of value. It is true that there is something in every human life worthy the name, that transcends time, something which has its value in and of itself, and abides unchanged through all the changes that time brings with it. 'Love,' says Paul, meaning by the word that glad self-surrender to the highest, which is our final proof of the kinship between man and his Maker, 'Love never faileth.' It is new every morning and fresh every evening. It is complete and perfect in every expression. Nothing needs to be added to it. When once we have touched it, we recognise it everywhere and always, for it is as eternal as God Himself.

It is so with all the permanent values that give dignity to human life. It is true of justice and of beauty, of loyalty and consecration and worship, that they have a certain changeless quality which characterises them everywhere and always, something that justifies the great surrender which men have gladly made in their behalf, and leaves life empty and meaningless when they are gone.

But it is one thing to say this, and quite another to suppose that the time element in our consciousness is negligible. How should we ever have come to appreciate the permanent value of these great ideals except against the background of the changing? What made Professor Münsterberg's friend the man he was if not the struggle against obstacles in this world of incompleteness? Where

else did he find the opportunity to call forth that human love which led to the dialogue we have been reviewing ?

But, if time has meaning for the eternal, now, why may it not continue to do so in the future ? Why may not new struggles in the life to come win new victories and inspire new love ? Here again we cannot help suspecting that we are dealing with an unreal antithesis. As the immortality of influence may prove consistent with a continuance of the individual self-consciousness, why may not this also prove true of the immortality of value ? [1]

At all events, the question is worth asking. If the modern view of the world requires the sacrifice of the Christian hope, we must face the issue with what courage we may ; but it is well to look before we leap. Our hope may prove to be more firmly rooted than is realised by those who are ready so lightly to discard it. There was a time when men supposed that modern science had made an end of faith in God, but to-day we see that it has established religion more securely than ever. May it not prove so with the matter of immortality ? This is a question which many in our day are asking. In the chapter that follows we shall consider the more important answers which they have given.

[1] On the significance of individuality cf. Professor Royce in his Ingersoll Lecture on *The Conception of Immortality*, Boston, 1900. He argues that we are not yet true individuals, but only on the way to individuality. This 'various and genuine individuality, which we are now loyally meaning to express, gets, from the absolute point of view, its final and conscious expression in a life that, like all life such as idealism recognises, is conscious, and that in its meaning, though not at all necessarily in space or in time, is continuous with the fragmentary and flickering existence wherein we now see through a glass darkly our relations to God and to the final truth ' (pp. 79-80).

CHAPTER X

THE RECOVERY OF FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

The chief attempts which have been made in our day to justify the Christian hope in the light of modern thought have followed one of three different lines. The first takes its departure from the theory of evolution. It reasons from the analogy of natural selection to the fact of conditional immortality, the fact, that is to say, that immortality, so far from being a universal endowment of humanity, is the prize of a selected group, those, namely, who through moral and spiritual discipline have fitted themselves to survive in the struggle for existence. The second bases its conclusions upon the experiments of psychical research. It claims that the fact of the continuance of personality after death has been proved by communications of the spirits of the dead to the living. The third founds faith in immortality upon the inherent worth of personality and, in the case of many of its representatives, extends this judgment of value to include all individuals who have ever lived, or who may live in the future. This is the theory of universalism.

Before we consider these more ambitious attempts to penetrate the mystery of death, we must linger for a moment on the threshold and consider what has been done to break the force of the most serious obstacle in the way of believing in the continuance of personal existence after death, that namely which grows out of the apparent dependence of consciousness upon the nervous system.

1. *The Bearing of Physical Science upon the Hope of Immortality*

When modern physical science first began the remarkable series of achievements which have transformed our conception of Nature and placed at our command resources of power hitherto undreamed of, it was natural for those who stood under the spell of the new magician to exaggerate the extent of the revolution which had been accomplished. The idealism of the past was lightly brushed aside, and materialism confidently proclaimed as the only satisfying philosophy. In his famous Belfast address Tyndall discovered in matter the promise and potency of every form of life. Others,[1] less cautious in their statements, declared consciousness to be a function of the brain which secretes thought as the liver secretes bile.

This confident dogmatism is no longer characteristic of our men of science. Materialism still has its advocates, even its militant advocates, but the power of materialism as a philosophy is waning. Helpful as it has proved in practice, the new method leaves the ultimate mysteries still unsolved. What we call matter and mind are only names for experiences whose ultimate cause remains hidden. We can trace their interplay, classify their sequences, predict with reasonable certainty the method of their activity, but no analysis has yet been able to resolve one into the other. If we are in quest of ultimate causes, it is at least as reasonable in face of the evidence that is open to us to assert that mind is the cause of matter as vice versa. Many prefer not to raise the question at all, and confess themselves frankly agnostic.

From the point of view of Christian faith this is a distinct gain. The door that leads to the future may be closed, but it is not locked, and it is possible for any

[1] *E.g.* Cabanis.

man of robust faith to open it for himself and enter into his rightful heritage of hope.

This is the note struck by Dr. William Osler in his recent Ingersoll Lecture on *Science and Immortality*.[1] He divides his contemporaries into three groups with reference to their attitude to the future life. The attitude of the majority is one of indifference. 'While accepting the phases and forms of the prevailing religion,' they 'live practically uninfluenced by it except in so far as it ministers to a wholesale dissonance between the inner and the outer life, and diffuses an atmosphere of general insincerity. A second group, larger perhaps to-day than ever before in history, put the supernatural altogether out of man's life, and regard the hereafter as only one of the many inventions he has sought out for himself. A third group, ever small and select, lay hold with the anchor of faith upon eternal life as the controlling influence in this one' (p. 8).

As between the three, science has nothing decisive to say. 'In the presence of so many mysteries which have been unveiled, in the presence of so many yet unsolved,' (p. 39), dogmatic denial is ruled out of court. Each must choose for himself that which satisfies his own inner needs. Some may 'wander through all phases to come at last,' the writer trusts, 'to the opinion of Cicero, who had rather be mistaken with Plato than be in the right with those who deny altogether the life after death' (p. 43). And this, the author concludes, is his own *Confessio Fidei*.

William James goes even further. He not only admits the possibility of continued self-consciousness after death; he shows the fallacy of the chief argument against it—that namely which is based upon the assumed dependence of consciousness upon the brain. Most of those who deny the possibility of immortality assume that the function of brain with reference to thought is productive. But

[1] Boston, 1904.

this, Professor James reminds us, is a pure assumption. 'In the world of physical nature productive function . . . is not the only kind of function with which we are familiar. We have also releasing or permissive function, and we have transmissive function.'[1] The trigger of a cross-bow is an example of permissive function. 'It removes the obstacle . . . and lets the bow fly back to its natural shape' (p. 14). A prism is an example of transmissive function. It sifts and limits the energy of light and determines it to a certain path and shape. So it may well be with the human brain. It is the instrument by which we transmit our thoughts, but thought is not therefore necessarily dependent for its existence or for its persistence upon the transmitter. For aught we know, there may be a world of spirit quite independent of this present world of sense experience, having its own means of communication, of which we know nothing. The fact that we cannot imagine the nature of the spirit world is no argument against its existence. In either case we are dealing with hypothesis, and, theory for theory, the transmissive view of the function of brain with reference to consciousness presents less difficulty than the productive theory (p. 22).[2]

2. *The Argument from Evolution. Conditional Immortality*

But we pass from these considerations of a purely permissive kind to the more positive arguments for the Christian hope. The first of these, as has been said, takes its departure from the theory of evolution, and reasons from the analogy of God's method in Nature to the

[1] *Human Immortality*, p. 13.

[2] Dr. Thompson, in his *Brain and Personality* (New York, 1906) argues from the assured results of brain physiology for the independence of the mind and the brain. The latter, he contends, is a tool which the mind forms for its own uses. This being the case, there is no more reason to suppose that the life of the spirit ceases with physical death than there is to suppose that it ceases with that temporary suspension of consciousness which we call sleep.

presence of similar processes in the spirit of man. We may take John Fiske as representative of this type of thought.[1]

Dr. Fiske first enunciated his argument for immortality in a little book called *The Destiny of Man*.[2] He there took the position that, apart from personal immortality, the entire process of the universe, as modern science has disclosed it to us, is irrational and unmeaning, a beginning without an ending, a foundation without a superstructure. The argument has been restated and amplified in his recent Ingersoll Lecture on *Life Everlasting*.[3]

In common with many other thoughtful observers, Dr. Fiske is impressed with the evidences of design in Nature. The world, as modern science has taught us to think of it, is the scene of a continuous process in which, through steps more and more complicated, Nature is producing ever higher forms of life. Man, as we know him, is the last step in the process of evolution, the being to whose making the entire process of development has contributed. But here we face a difficulty. Since man appeared there has apparently been, in his branch of the animate world, no further step in the evolutionary process. No further species has been developed, nor is there any likelihood that any new species will be developed. Progress still continues, but it is within man, not beyond him. Man is growing abler, wiser, better able to control his environment, but he still remains man.

Man, I repeat, is growing abler and better, but it is a development within limits. For the race it is limited by the duration of life upon earth, and for the individual by the ever-recurring fact of death. Death interrupts even for the best of men the adaptation which life has begun,

[1] For a fuller statement cf. Armand Sabatier, *Essai sur l'Immortalité au Point de Vue du Naturalisme Evolutioniste*, Paris, 1895. Cf. also Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, New York, 1897.

[2] *The Destiny of Man, viewed in the Light of his Origin*, Boston, 1884.

[3] Boston, 1901.

and leaves the evolutionary process arrested and incomplete. Here is the point upon which Dr. Fiske bases his argument for immortality. What if the interruption be only apparent and not real? What if this life is a training-school in which the spirit of man is being fitted for a life beyond? Then indeed the difficulty would be removed. The continuity of the evolutionary process would be established, and with the discovery of a plan beneficent, wise, and comprehensive, we should be able to rise through Nature to God.

The argument, it will be observed, is frankly teleological. Dr. Fiske assumes that the demand of our nature for a rational universe is legitimate and trustworthy. He believes that the evidences of reason in Nature are valid as far as they go, and he accepts immortality because it supplies the keystone to the arch, which is necessary to give the entire structure firmness and consistency. Such acceptance is to him 'a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work.'[1] How else, he asks, shall we account for the intimations of immortality which meet us in human history almost from the beginning? Man is the only being who believes in his own continued existence after death.[2] Why should this be? Nature does not ordinarily create capacities which have no use. If she has put this hope into the heart of man, it is *prima facie* evidence that it will somewhere have fulfilment. As for the objection that we have no direct evidence of another life, Dr. Fiske rules it out of court as irrelevant. How can we have evidence of a kind of existence which by definition lies beyond our present experience? (p. 61). It is no argument against human life that the unborn child knows nothing of the conditions that await him after birth. Why then should we expect to anticipate the life which we shall enter through the second birth that we call death?

But the analogy of the evolutionary process suggests

[1] *Human Destiny*, p. 116. [2] *Life Everlasting*, p. 38.

another conclusion which, if valid, would require the modification of earlier statements of the Christian hope. Evolution, as science reveals it, is a process of natural selection, a process, that is to say, through which Nature exercises choice as to the types or individuals who shall survive. Not all the forms which have appeared upon earth persist, and of the individuals who make up any particular species the great majority perish. What does this suggest for our thought of the life after death ?

This obviously, that immortality is not so much a natural as an acquired characteristic. It belongs not to all men, but to the favoured few. It is a prize to be won by those who prove themselves worthy. This is the view taken by those who hold the theory of conditional immortality.[1]

According to this view life is a training-school in which, out of the raw material of the natural, God is forming for Himself a spiritual humanity. Every child is born with the capacity for an immortal life, but whether that life will actually be realised depends upon the use made of the opportunities which are enjoyed here. Some men misuse their opportunities. They resist the appeal of the Christ for obedience and service. They stifle the voice of their own higher nature. They close their ears to the cry of suffering humanity. They live for the gratification of their own selfish appetites and passions. They care for nothing but to heap up money or pleasure or power. So, little by little, the powers which might have fitted them for another life are atrophied, and when death comes there is nothing left to survive.

It is otherwise with those who heed the Christian message. In them 'the powers of the world to come' are already present. Each loving thought, each unselfish

[1] It is only fair to state that this conclusion is not drawn by all who use the argument from evolution. Thus Dr. Gordon in his *Immortality and the New Theodicy* (p. 81), finds the adoption of the evolutionary view consistent with universalism.

deed, each generous impulse, is so much nourishment to the seed of immortality which God has planted in every human heart. In the measure that men become conformed to Christ is the certainty of their future existence assured. For as surely as God raised Christ from the dead will He preserve for the joy and service of His kingdom those who in this life become conformed to His Son.

This theory of conditional immortality is widely held among Christians to-day.[1] It is defended both on rational and on biblical grounds. It corresponds, we are told, with what we know in other realms. It affirms one law for Nature and for grace. It harmonises the biblical passages which assert the final loss of some with those others which anticipate the complete triumph of Christ's cause in the universe (*e.g.* 1 Cor. xv. 28). It avoids the horror of the older eschatology, with its eternity, not only of suffering, but of sin, while at the same time it does full justice to the doom which Christ pronounces upon the impenitent. Above all, it bases faith in immortality where the Bible bases it, upon moral and religious grounds. It substitutes for the Greek conception of natural immortality—a view read into the Bible by later speculation—the Christian doctrine that the one sure ground for hope in immortality is Christlikeness.

A theory so ably supported is worthy of serious attention. We may readily admit that in challenging the conception of natural immortality in its traditional form and recalling attention to the moral and religious basis of the Christian hope, the advocates of conditional immortality have rendered a real service to theology. At many points their criticism of the older eschatology is justified, and the view which they propose as a substitute is at once more rational and more biblical.

[1] Among its advocates, present and past, may be mentioned E. Schultz and Rothe in Germany, Petavel and Armand Sabatier in France, Edward White and Row in England, and Huntington and M'Connell in America. For references in detail cf. the Bibliography in the Appendix.

Yet, in spite of these excellencies, the theory is not without its difficulties. It divides mankind into two groups, the natural man who, like the beasts that perish, is destined to literal destruction, and the spiritual man, who alone is destined to immortality. Where shall we draw the line between the two groups? How shall we discriminate the natural man from his brother who is spiritual? How, above all, shall we reconcile this distinction with Christ's estimate of the infinite worth of every individual? If all men are, as he taught, really sons of God, how can we conceive that any can permanently perish? On the older theory the issue of life may have been terrible, but it was at least glorious. Even in hell the lost retain traces of their original calling, and in their punishment glorify the justice of God. But here they are mere refuse, thrown out on the rubbish-heap of the universe, to meet a fate as ignominious as that which befalls the basest forms of matter. It is difficult to see how those who contemplate this issue for any considerable number of their fellow men can retain that sense of immeasurable values which has been the inspiration of the highest Christian service.

3. *The Spiritistic Hypothesis*

From the theory of conditional immortality we pass to the next of the three forms of argument which will engage our attention, that namely which is based upon the fact of alleged communications from the spirit world. Thus far we have been dealing with probable evidence. Here we are offered what claims to be direct proof.

We may take as our representative of this point of view the late Frederic Myers, whose massive volumes entitled *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*,[1]

[1] London, 1903. A popular edition in a single volume much condensed was issued by his son in 1907. For further references cf. the Bibliography in the Appendix.

constitute the most imposing collection of testimony as to alleged communications from the spirit world which is in our possession.

The subject is one of such difficulty, both on account of the mass of material involved, the delicacy of the questions at issue, and the lack of agreement on the part of those who have studied the evidence, that it is impossible to discuss it with the thoroughness which its importance deserves. All that I can hope to do within the limits which are at our disposal is, first, to state the grounds on which the argument is based; secondly, to explain the value ascribed to it by its advocates; and, thirdly, to estimate the importance of its contribution to the Christian hope.

And first, as to the nature of the argument. In principle it is very simple. In detail it is extraordinarily complicated.

In principle, I say, it is very simple. It may be summed up in a single sentence, that it is reasonable to believe in the continuance of human personality after death because it is possible to communicate with men and women who are actually living in the other world.

Evidently, all turns on the nature of the proof, and it is here that the complications to which reference was made begin.

The argument falls into two parts. The first deals with the possibility of communication between persons who are physically separated in this life, and the second applies the conclusion reached to the case of alleged communications between the living and the dead.

So far as the first is concerned, the author takes his departure from the fact of telepathy, or the ability of spirit to communicate with spirit 'independently of the recognised channels of sense.'[1] This he regards as a well-

[1] The definition of telepathy by the Society of Psychical Research is as follows: 'The communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another independently of the recognised channels of sense.' Cf. Hyslop, *Science and a Future Life*, p. 34.

established psychological law, affording at least presumptive evidence of the possibility of communication with disembodied spirits.[1]

The author then considers in detail the forms which communication may take between spirit and spirit here. He includes in his survey the phenomena of abnormal psychology, or, in other words, those which deal with the psychology of the subnormal and the supernormal man. He finds that there are three ways in which spirit may act upon spirit: first, by the suggestion of an idea, the method made familiar to us by hypnotism; secondly, by phantasms of various kinds, or, in other words, appearances to the senses (as by a vision at the moment of death); and finally, in the third place, by motor automatisms, or, in other words, activities produced in the subject by another subject without his own knowledge or voluntary participation (as in the case of table-tipping, or automatic writing). All these modes of communication obtain between the living, Dr. Myers argues. Therefore they may conceivably obtain between the living and the dead.

The second part of the argument is devoted to establishing this thesis. It is contended that such communications have actually been proved by evidence adequate to convince any person of fair mind who will consider it. This evidence consists in the fact that through one or other of the methods above described there has been imparted through mediums (*i.e.* persons of peculiarly sensitive temperament to such communication) facts concerning the personal history of persons who have died, of which they (*i.e.* the mediums) had no previous knowledge, and of which it was impossible for them to have learned save by the personal communication of the spirits in question. Upon this fact the author bases his faith

[1] It is to be noted that this assumption is not shared by all who sympathise with Dr. Myers in his general endeavour. On the limitation of the telepathic hypothesis, cf. Hyslop, *op. cit.* p. 248 *sq.*; *Psychical Research and the Resurrection*, p. 305 *sq.*

in the continuance of the human personality after death.

It is obvious that such an argument must involve an infinity of detail and deal with matters of little interest to any but those personally acquainted with the subject in question. To the scientific value of the results obtained I shall return in a moment. Here I wish to call attention to the practical value which Dr. Myers assigns to them.

This can hardly be exaggerated. According to Dr. Myers the importance of the results which he has obtained is so great that upon their acceptance or rejection will turn the future of the Christian religion. Let us hear his own words :—

'I venture now on a bold saying; for I predict that, in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the Resurrection of Christ, whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men, a century hence, would have believed it. The ground of this forecast is plain enough. Our ever-growing recognition of the continuity, the uniformity of cosmic law has gradually made of the alleged *uniqueness* of any incident its almost inevitable refutation. Ever more clearly must our age of science realise that any relation between a material and a spiritual world cannot be an ethical or emotional relation alone; that it must needs be a great structural fact of the Universe, involving laws at least as persistent, as identical from age to age, as our known laws of Energy or of Motion. And especially as to that central claim, of the soul's life manifested after the body's death, it is plain that this can less and less be supported by remote tradition alone; that it must more and more be tested by modern experience and inquiry. Suppose, for instance, that we collect many such histories, recorded on firsthand evidence in our critical age; and suppose that all these narratives break down on analysis; that they can all be traced to hallucination, misdescription, and other persistent sources of error;—can we then expect reasonable men to believe that this marvellous phenomenon, always vanishing into nothingness when closely scrutinised in a modern English scene, must yet compel adoring

credence when alleged to have occurred in an Oriental country, and in a remote and superstitious age? Had the results (in short) of "psychical research" been purely negative, would not Christian evidence—I do not say Christian *emotion*, but Christian *evidence*—have received an overwhelming blow?

As a matter of fact—or, if you prefer the phrase, in my own personal opinion—our research has led us to results of a quite different type. They have not been negative only, but largely positive. We have shown that amid much deception and self-deception, fraud and illusion, veritable manifestations do reach us from beyond the grave. The central claim of Christianity is thus confirmed, as never before. If our own friends, men like ourselves, can sometimes return to tell us of love and hope, a mightier Spirit may well have used the eternal laws with a more commanding power. There is nothing to hinder the reverent faith that, though we be all "the Children of the Most Highest," He came nearer than we, by some space by us immeasurable, to That which is infinitely far. There is nothing to hinder the devout conviction that He of His own act "took upon Him the form of a servant," and was made flesh for our salvation, foreseeing the earthly travail and the eternal crown.'[1]

Certainly these are noble words. No one can read them without profound respect for the writer and deep sympathy with the purpose that inspired him. If we question the conclusion he draws, it is not because we belittle the issue, but because we rate it so highly that we are unwilling to imperil our faith by committing it to any basis which may prove unstable.

Is it true, then, that faith in the Resurrection of Jesus stands or falls with the acceptance of the results of the Society of Psychical Research? I for one cannot believe this. These results (could they be established) might indeed be fruitful helps to faith, but faith itself rests upon a deeper foundation, namely, the overwhelming impression made by the personality of Jesus upon the moral consciousness of mankind. This it is which for centuries

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 351 *sq.*

has carried faith in Jesus' Resurrection in default of such evidence as Dr. Myers now believes he is able to furnish, and this, I am persuaded, will still continue to carry it even in default of such evidence in the centuries that are to come.

But, though such evidence may not be necessary to maintain Christian faith in the Resurrection, it would afford a welcome confirmation of that faith if it could be adduced. How do matters stand here?

So far as the present writer is able to judge, our conclusion must be, not proven. The facts which have convinced Dr. Myers have seemed to other observers to admit of a different explanation. Further evidence may require a revision of opinion, but for the present the proper attitude of an impartial observer would seem to be one of reserve.[1]

There is one point, however, in connection with the alleged proofs which requires a word of further comment. Objection is often made to the spiritistic hypothesis on the ground of the extraordinary emptiness of the communications which have been received. Granting their genuineness, we are told that they have not added to our stock of knowledge a new idea or done anything to strengthen our desire to share in the life of the departed.

Professor Hyslop, to be sure, finds a ready answer to this objection. He tells us that it is not fair to argue as to the state of the dead from the nature of the communications which have thus far been received from them. In the nature of the case the matters of which they speak must be trivial, since the main object is to convince the living of their personal identity, and in the proof of personal identity it is only the trivial that counts. We must remember, moreover, the abnormal conditions under which

[1] Some eminent psychologists go considerably farther. They hold that while the facts gathered by the Society of Psychical Research have been useful in increasing our knowledge of abnormal psychology, they have not succeeded in adducing a particle of evidence of the existence of disembodied spirits.

the communication is made.[1] By and by, when the fact is established, and the channel of communication is open more freely, it is possible that we may receive other information of a more satisfying kind. In the meantime, we must be content to wait with patience.[2]

It may be so. We are not prepared to deny it; and when that time comes, we shall be the first to honour the brave pioneers whose persistent labour has opened to us this new and fruitful source of inspiration. But for the present all that we can say is that we must look elsewhere for the foundation of our Christian hope. The life for which we look is a life like that of Christ, and for this we must still continue to build our faith upon Jesus.

It is just at this point that the parallelism which Dr Myers draws between the appearances of Jesus and the communications alleged to have been received from disembodied spirits to-day breaks down. Even if the latter could be proved, they remain isolated phenomena, disconnected with the interests and needs of our daily life. Jesus' appearance was the source of a moral dynamic which transformed the lives of His disciples. If the Resurrection was the confirmation of faith in His Messiahship, it was just as true that the experience of His continued influence was the confirmation of faith in His Resurrection. The two go together, the past event and the present experience, and without the latter, faith in the former could not permanently have maintained itself.

4. *The Argument from Value. Universalism*

So we are led naturally to consider the third method of

[1] *Science and a Future Life*, p. 300 *sq.*

[2] On this last point investigators differ. Dr. Myers is optimistic, expecting that 'as our link with other spirits strengthens . . . we shall feel love more ardent, wider wisdom, higher joy' (p. 354). Dr. Hyslop, on the other hand, recognises inherent limitations in our relation to the spirit world, which preclude the possibility of any large or fruitful increase in our knowledge of the conditions of another life (*op. cit.* p. 304).

justifying the Christian hope, that which is based upon the inherent worth of personality. This indeed has always been the real foundation of belief in immortality Men have anticipated a life after death because life here seemed so worthful that they could not bring themselves to believe in its cessation. What is new in the modern statement of the argument is simply the frankness with which this fact is recognised.

We may take Dr. Dole as representative of this point of view. In his recent suggestive Ingersoll Lecture on *The Hope of Immortality* [1] he plants himself squarely on this ground. He believes in immortality because it seems to him inextricably interwoven with all the values that give meaning and beauty to the universe. For the mere duration of life he cares nothing, but for the meaning and uses of life he cares much. And these uses are all wrapped up in that familiar yet most mysterious fact we call personality. 'The more we care for personality, the higher we conceive it, the more we grow toward it, the more instinctively we are possessed with the fact that it cannot die' (p. 51). And again, 'The idea of immortality is an assertion of the indestructible worth of the values that characterise humanity at its best. The lower values, even force and motion and the atoms of matter, appear to persist even while they change their forms. At any rate they affect something in exact proportion to their bigness. They all make the way and lead up to the fruitage of the universe in its high values of truth, wisdom, justice, and good-will. To affirm immortality is simply to say that in a world where other and lower values all accomplish something and pass on and up in the trend of their action, where even a grain of sand on the seashore has its place and does not exist for nought, where the spring flower has its chance to die in order to live again in the form of fruit at the harvest, the greatest of all values to which the others are

[1] New York, 1906.

mere counters, must likewise go on in their proper sphere and not come to naught' (p. 17).

For there is no such thing, we must remember, as 'justice, or truth, or love in the abstract. All these are terms by which we describe persons. Where no persons are, there is no conceivable thought, or righteousness, or will either good or bad. Expel, if you can, the idea of personality from the universe, and it is doubtful whether anything would be left, for everything appears to exist in some relation or other to conscious and intelligent, that is, personal life.' Thus faith in immortality seems the inevitable corollary of our faith in the existence of a rational universe (p. 19).

How far does this faith carry us? What does it involve for the myriads of human beings who have lived on earth, or who shall live hereafter? That the great heroes and prophets of humanity, 'Isaiah, Jesus, Dante, Lincoln' (p. 27), should continue to live seems reasonable; that all generous and noble spirits should be preserved for future usefulness and future service is only what we should expect of a wise and just God, but what of the Neroes and the Borgias? What of those who deliberately follow the path of selfishness and sensuality? What, above all, of the colourless personalities, neither good nor bad, flitting ineffectively across the stage of life like the ghosts of the old Sheol, to which the imagination of the ancient world consigned them? The frustrate souls, the Tomlinsons and the Peer Gynts of life—what place shall we assign them in our thought of the future? Is the theory of conditional immortality right in its picture of their fate? Is their destiny utter destruction, or at best to fall a victim to the ladle of the great button-moulder, Death, there to be melted up into the raw material of other and more effective lives?

This is a question which has called forth much earnest thought in our day, and which not a few have found

themselves unable to answer in the affirmative. What, they ask, does Christianity mean, if not the discovery of values in that which has hitherto been dismissed as valueless? What was the new and distinctive thing in Jesus' teaching, if not His insistence upon the worth of the human soul as such? We read in John's Gospel that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (iii.16). How can we claim that He has fulfilled His purpose if the final outcome of the universe involves the permanent destruction of millions of His children?

The theory of the ultimate salvation of all souls, or Universalism as it is commonly called, is a very ancient one. Origen, the first and in many respects the greatest theologian of the ancient Church, formulated it more than sixteen centuries ago. It has been cherished as a personal hope by individuals from time to time, but the Church as a whole, both in its Catholic and Protestant branches, has rejected it. Only comparatively recently has it been revived, at first as the faith of a single group of Protestants, more recently by individual thinkers within the larger bodies of Christendom.[1] An instance of such a revival is Dr. Gordon's recent Ingersoll Lecture on *Immortality and the New Theodicy*.[2]

As the title of the lecture indicates, Dr. Gordon takes his departure from the problem of evil. How, he asks, can you reconcile the goodness of God with the sin and suffering of which this world is so full? (p. 48). And he finds his answer where all profound thinkers have found it, in the making of personality. It is a process painful and costly enough, God knows. 'The way up from the animal condition into that of the perfect Son of God remains an agony and a bloody sweat. Nothing can change that

[1] Cf. the literature cited in the Appendix.
[2] Boston, 1897.

pathway of torture and tears. Nothing can mitigate its iron and everlasting necessity' (p. 93). Still, dreadful as it is, we would not shrink from following it, if only we could be sure that it would lead us to the goal. But it is here that the difficulty begins; the cost is so enormously great and the outcome so pitifully small. A little group of noble spirits meets us, the martyrs and saints, the heroes and prophets, the poets and teachers of humanity, but they are balanced by so vast a number with whom God seems to have failed. If all men were like Christ, or even on the way to Christlikeness, Calvary would cease to be a stumbling-block, but what makes faith hard is the fact that in spite of Calvary the Herods and the Pilates still continue.

In every age this difficulty has been a real one. But in our own it has been enormously increased by 'the new vista of humanity' which modern knowledge has 'opened to the mind of our time' (p. 81). 'With the entire field of humanity fairly within sight, with even but an imperfect sense of the reach and the fulness of the spaces that beings like ourselves have peopled, standing only in the early dawn of this wide and wondrous day, it has been found impossible to work the old ideas of limitation, whether remnant, election, or probation restricted to this life' (p. 81). How in the face of such facts can we still maintain our faith in God's wise and loving purpose for mankind? How else, asks Dr. Gordon, than by recognising that what we see is only the beginning of the process? Life is a great training-school, of which the earth is only the primary department. Christ is the firstfruits, the example, after which little by little our Father is patterning all His children. We must give Him time. In the end He will have His way.

Here, according to Dr. Gordon, is the great significance of faith in immortality. It makes room for God to accomplish His purpose. It is the school in which He

trains His backward children. It is the necessary condition of the only satisfying theodicy.

It is a great mistake to think of Universalism as an easy-going theory, indifferent to sin or lightly estimating its consequences. Universalism believes in punishment, and in punishment after death. Indeed punishment is the necessary means for that process of purification by which mankind is finally to be redeemed. Universalists accept Christ's words in Matthew as a truthful description of the doom that must finally follow unrepented sin. They have no other standard for salvation than that which the Master Himself has laid down. They can promise no easier conditions in the life after death. For them, as for the orthodox, sin brings punishment, and the longer it continues, the more severe will be the punishment, and the more difficult the way of recovery. But they believe that in the end recovery is certain. God, who has made man for Himself, will not be defeated in His redemptive purpose. Sooner or later, by one road or another, Christ will draw all men unto Himself.

Thus, while the old Calvinism extended Hell till it included Purgatory, Universalism extends Purgatory till it takes in Hell. Both believe in punishment after death. Both accept the principle of retribution, but while Calvinism regards retribution as an end in itself, Universalism makes it the means of another and a higher end, namely, redemption.

Such, then, are some of the lines along which modern thought has been working in its effort to recover and to restate the Christian hope. In the remaining chapters we shall try to sum up the conclusions to which the recovery leads.

III

CONSTRUCTIVE

CHAPTER XI

THE DEFINITION OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

We have come to the end of our story. Before we take up the final questions which it raises, let us pause for a moment and recall the ground which we have traversed.

We have seen that so far back as we can go we find man believing in his own continued existence after death, but this existence is at first no object of desire, for it is empty and ineffective and joyless. We have seen that at a certain stage in his development man has broken with this primitive conception and dared to hope for a life worth living after death. We have seen that this hope has taken various forms; sometimes that of a return to this earth, as in the doctrine of the Resurrection; sometimes that of a moral life in the underworld, and again that of a purely disembodied existence, as in the philosophical conception of immortality. We have traced the antecedents of the Christian hope in the religion of Israel and seen how in historic Christianity all three of these different forms of preparation meet and mingle. We have found the distinctive contribution of Christianity to faith in immortality to be Christ Himself—a contribution made through His teaching, character, and Resurrection. We have studied the evidence for the Resurrection and traced its effects upon the Christian hope, and we have seen that its significance was not so much in its proof of the fact of a life after death, or even in its disclosure of the conditions under which such a life is lived, as in the assurance that Jesus was what

He professed to be, God's chosen Messiah and Saviour, and hence the key to the meaning of life both here and hereafter. We have traced the chief forms which the Christian hope has assumed in the later centuries, such as the premillenarian expectation of a speedy advent, the Catholic doctrine of a progressive purification in purgatory, and the Protestant affirmation of immediate sanctification or condemnation at death. We have seen how the doctrine of immortality, after passing practically unscathed through the radical criticism of the deistic controversy, has been rudely challenged in our day, and we have considered the substitutes which have been proposed for it. Finally, we have seen the lost hope revived, and have studied the chief forms of restatement which have been suggested by its modern advocates. It remains to ask, what conclusions are to be drawn from the history which we have passed in review. Three questions emerge as of supreme importance. The first has to do with the *content*; the second with the *ground*; the third with the *value* of the Christian hope. For what do we hope? Why do we hope it, and what consequences may we expect to follow for our daily living? In the present chapter we shall consider the first of these questions, leaving the other two to be dealt with in the chapters that follow.

And first, of the content of our hope. What does our imagination picture as it turns toward the future? How far do we twentieth century men and women share the anticipation of the Christians who have preceded us, and how far has our hope been modified by the changes which we have passed in review? This is a question of fundamental importance, for upon our answer to it will depend our answer to both the questions that follow.

1. *Individual and Social Aspects of the Christian Hope*

Let us remind ourselves again of the definition with which we began. We saw that the Christian hope is at once

individual and social, that it involves on the one hand a belief in the continuance of personal existence after death under conditions which insure the continuity of the self-conscious moral life, and at the same time (and this is just as important) that it anticipates continued fellowship with God, our Father, and continued service of our fellow-men in the new social order which Christ came to establish, and the principles of which He exemplified in His own life. It is at once the synthesis and the Christianisation of the two great lines of hope which have preceded it, the individual hope which culminates in the doctrine of immortality, and the social hope which expresses itself in the doctrine of the Resurrection.

How far is this definition adequate as a description of our present hope? To answer this we must consider more in detail what it involves in each of its aspects.

In the first place, then, the Christian hope involves belief in the continuance of personal existence after death under conditions which make possible the continuity of the individual self-consciousness. It is the affirmation of personal immortality. But it is much more than this. It is the affirmation of the kind of immortality which Christ has brought to light, a life which involves growing conformity to His character, and which issues ultimately into complete transformation into His likeness.

This opens up to us at once further possibilities of definition. Whatever qualities mark the character of Christ during His earthly life must reappear in our thought of our own future. Like His, our life must be one of filial trust. Like His, it must be one of brotherly service.

In the older discussions of the Christian hope the former aspect of the life after death was chiefly emphasised.[1] It was represented as a life of perfect rest and confidence in God, free from the doubt and uncertainty which characterise

[1] This was true, as we have seen, both of its Catholic and of its Protestant forms.

our present experience, a life of attainment rather than of struggle, of peace rather than of effort. The figures of the crown, the palm, and the harp, symbols of triumph and of victory, have been central in the imagery, and the relation of the Christian to his fellows overshadowed, if not wholly forgotten, in the overwhelming impression of the realised presence of God.

We gladly admit that this sense of attainment is an integral element in the Christian hope. We long for the day when the uncertainty and doubt which characterise so much of our living here shall cease, when the veil that so often hides from our vision the presence of God shall be taken away, and we shall be as conscious of His nearness as we are of the ground we tread, or of the hand-grasp that assures us of the presence of a friend.

But a hope that contains no more than this is one-sided and inadequate. It is as true of the life to come as of the life that now is, that, if it is to be Christian, it must be a life of service. Can we really believe that He who on earth went about doing good ceased His loving ministry with His earthly life? Are we to think of death as rendering obsolete the lesson that He had been all His life teaching, that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Shall we suppose that the strong men from whose heroic struggles mankind has drawn inspiration for its best living, Peter and Paul, Benedict and Francis, Luther and Cromwell, Wesley and Livingstone, have found no outlet in the new life for the missionary zeal which was the very breath of their life here? To suppose this would be to cut the nerve of the Christian hope, for it would make heaven less desirable than earth. Whatever else may be true of the future, we may be sure that it will give us something to do.

This is only another way of saying that our hope is not merely individual but social. It is not only a hope of personal salvation but of the Christianisation of society as a whole. Here, too, we must ask just what it is that we

expect. What would it mean to have Christ's prayer answered and God's kingdom come?

It is easier to answer this question in words than to realise all that the words mean. It would mean no less than the transformation of human life in all its relations into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It would mean the substitution of sympathy for suspicion, generosity for meanness, loyalty for treachery, justice for oppression, humility for pride, love for hate. It would mean this not only in the relation of individual to individual, but in those complex social relationships which express themselves through institutions and which yield most slowly to the growing pressure of the ideal. Above and beyond all else, it would involve the transfiguring of human relations by the consciousness of the divine Fatherhood. It would mean the breaking down, once and for all, of the age-long barrier between the sacred and the secular, the coming of the time when in very truth holiness should be written 'upon the bells of the horses' (Zech. xiv. 20), and school and state and workshop as well as church be recognised as the dwelling-place of God.

It needs only the statement of this ideal to see how impossible it is to conceive of its complete realisation within the limits of our earthly life. We are indeed to pray the Master's prayer that the kingdom may come on earth as in heaven, and to work for the answer to our prayer; just as we are to pray that here and now we may be conformed to Christ's character and are to work for the answer to our prayer. But in the one case as in the other we deal with an ideal that outreaches the possibility of present attainment, and requires for its complete realisation the broad expanses of the life to come. So far is it from being true of Christianity that the social hope can take the place of the individual hope that each requires the other for its complement, and the former even more than the latter forces us beyond the limits of the present life for the scope and reach which it requires for its fulfilment.

2. *The Permanent Content of the Christian Hope*

This is the permanent truth which finds expression in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. This doctrine, as we have already seen, has social as well as individual significance. It is the form in which we express our faith in the conservation of the full value of personality in both the aspects in which it is known to us here. In this life the body fulfils for us a double function. It is at once the means by which we realise our own purposes, and the channel by which we enter into social intercourse with others. We cannot doubt that in the life to come these two needs will still be present and will still be met. Like Paul we 'would not be unclothed but clothed upon' (2 Cor. v. 4), furnished, that is to say, with whatever instrument we need for the effective execution of our social purposes. Body is the term which lends itself most readily to the expression of this vital faith.

Beyond this we need not go. Indeed, it is difficult for us to go further if we would. When we seek to make real to ourselves the conditions of existence in the undiscovered country we are involved in all the difficulties which we have already noted. How shall we conceive the spiritual body, of which Paul speaks? How can we picture an existence which is definite and real, and yet which has left behind all that we associate with this present body of flesh and blood? Has matter wider possibilities than our senses have yet been able to discover, and must we conceive of the new body as physical, though of an organisation as much finer than that of the present body as that of the air is than the liquid into which extreme cold is able to precipitate it?[1] Or, is spirit able to communicate directly

[1] The subject of the physical conditions of the future life has long had a fascination for thinkers. Among older books may be mentioned Taylor's *Physical Theory of another Life* (New York, 1852). More recently the subject has been discussed by Stewart and Tait in their book on the *Unseen*

with spirit in ways for which our present experience affords no analogy? Here is a field fascinating in its invitation to the imagination, but in which we lack the solid framework of assured fact. There is nothing in this to cause anxiety or to disturb faith. No description, however detailed and accurate, can anticipate experience. To understand life we must be born. To understand immortality we must die. Then doubtless it will seem to us so simple that we shall wonder that we ever doubted. For the present it is enough to know that when we awake we shall be satisfied.

Are we then shut up to complete ignorance as to the nature of the life to which we look forward? If the door of sense is closed, may not a glimpse be had through the window of spirit? As Christians we believe that we are to live like Christ and for Christ. Can we draw no further conclusion from this central faith?

One conclusion certainly would seem to follow, that life then as now will be one of progress. There will still be new lessons to be learned, new battles to be fought, new experiences to be gained, new services to be rendered. It will not be a life of stagnation, but of activity, not of monotony, but of change.

This would seem to follow, in the first place, from the very nature of personality as we know it. Everything that is alive grows, and the higher the form of life the greater the capacity for growth. That which separates personality from all other forms of life is the fact that in the case of persons we can discover no limits to this capacity. This is, indeed, as we shall see, the crowning argument for

Universe (London, 1894), and by Fechner, in his work entitled, *On Life after Death* (Eng. tr., Chicago, 1906). In this interesting, but fanciful work, Fechner attempts to show in detail how the continued activity of the disembodied spirit is possible. He assumes a hierarchy of consciousnesses, higher and lower, interpenetrating and interacting upon one another, and making use of processes of perception not at present open to us. For the details of his theory, which is too complicated to be reproduced here, cf. especially Appendix, p. 112, on the principle of heavenly vision.

immortality, that we need limitless time to satisfy the needs of the limitless spirit.

These considerations, drawn from the nature of spirit, are reinforced by our observation of the moral life. How far we are, even the best of us, from the perfection to which we aspire! How much of our living is still selfish and narrow; how many bad habits still persist, from which as yet we have been unable to free ourselves! Shall we imagine all this changed in an instant by the mere fact of death? Will all the differences in character and attainment which this life reveals be merged in one dead level of sinlessness? Will there not still be room for moral struggle and moral victory?

Such an expectation of moral progress need not involve the persistence of wilful sin. Indeed, there are many who believe that in this life it is possible by divine grace to become so conformed to God's will that all wilful sin will be left behind.[1] But such victory over the more obvious forms of temptation is quite another thing from that complete moral perfection which is the goal of Christian hope. For this, time is needed and training, a training to which we can perceive no limits.

And what shall we say of the infant and the backward souls, the little children who have slipped from us into the care of that 'shepherd of tender youth,' to whom the great eastern poet[2] has lovingly consigned them? What

[1] Such was the view of Wesley. Cf. *Works*, viii. p. 294 *sq.*, 328 *sq.*, and especially his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (xi. p. 366 *sq.*).

[2] Ephraim, the Syrian. Professor Gilbert thus translates his beautiful hymn:

> 'Our God, to Thee sweet praises rise
> From youthful lips in Paradise;
> From boys fair robed in spotless white,
> And nourished in the courts of light.
> In arbours they, where soft and low
> The blessed streams of light do flow:
> And Gabriel, a shepherd strong,
> Doth gently guide their flocks along.

of the half-developed personalities whom some clot on the brain has robbed of their rightful share of human experience? For these, surely, the life hereafter must mean growth in knowledge and character.

The argument becomes even more convincing when we shift our point of view from the individual to society. In this life progress takes place through adaptation to a changing environment, and we cannot think that it will be otherwise in the life to come. There too, as here, we shall have to do with conditions that are constantly altering. There too, as well as here, we shall be members of a society that is ever facing new problems, ever calling for new consecration. There too, as well as here, we may be sure, there will be lessons to be taught as well as learned, help to be given as well as received, experiences to be shared as well as enjoyed. There too, as well as here (unless we are to deny Christians their share in the highest experience of the Master), we shall be ever conscious of the struggle going on on earth, where sin is still alive and active, and poverty and shame and ignorance and despair daily claim their toll of human lives. Can we believe that this appalling tragedy, so central in our experience here, will there have lost its meaning? Can we be content to have no part in the moral issues that are being decided, if it be only by the yearning sympathy of our prayer? Can we be content to see those whom we love in hell (if it be only this human hell of misery and sin and hate that we know), and praise God for the sight because we have attained? That was not Paul's idea of heaven. That would have been to him a failure worse than hell.

Are we then to admit suffering into our thought of the future? I do not see how we can banish suffering while the cause of it still exists. I am sure we should not

> Their honours higher and more fair
> Than those of saints and virgins are;
> God's sons are they on that far coast,
> And nurselings of the Holy Ghost.'

wish to. But we can do something better. We can rob suffering of its terror through the discovery of the uses it is meant to serve. Even while we suffer, we can be assured of victory for ourselves and, what is even more important and more difficult, for others, and the assurance can turn our sorrow into joy.

Here, as always, we turn back to Christ. He is our great model for the life to come as for the life here. As in this life He met sin and sorrow in the most acute forms and conquered them by His cross, so we must believe He is ever meeting and conquering them to-day. Still, as in the days when He wept over Jerusalem, His heart is broken by men's hypocrisy and tyranny. Still, as with the young ruler whose discipleship He sought in vain, His love goes out in earnest quest, only to return empty handed. Still in your heart and mine He is crucified afresh day by day. Still in and through all the sacrifice He is more than conqueror through the assurance that the sacrifice is not in vain. Ever He anticipates the victory which is to come, the final conquest which, however long delayed, will not fail. So, He can say to us, as He said to His disciples long ago, 'My peace I give unto you' (John xiv. 27). 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. xi. 28).

In some such way, it seems to me, we must picture the future to which Christ invites us, a life not less earnest but more restful, not less sympathetic but more confident. Tears there may still be, but ever a Christ to share them and a God to wipe them away. This confident rest with Christ in God in ceaseless labour and unbroken trust is what the Christian means by heaven.[1]

It is this assurance of ultimate triumph which gives its

[1] The word heaven may be used in three senses: (1) of the place of future blessedness; (2) of the state of the finally blessed; (3) of the qualities which enter into that state (*e.g.* consecration, peace, the consciousness of communion with God). In the latter sense heaven may be a present experience, differing only in degree from the blessedness of the future state.

permanent meaning to the doctrine of the Advent. The Advent means far more than the physical return of Christ to earth. It means the complete victory of His cause and the universal reign of His Spirit. It is the promise of the day 'when the kingdom of the world' shall 'become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ' (Rev. xi. 15).

But, if we cherish this hope, it must be in a Christian way. We cannot think of God as an easy-going Deity, too kindly to punish, ready to take man on his own terms. We dare not make light of sin, or underestimate the consequences it brings for the inner life as for the outer. We must not play fast and loose with the principles which Jesus enunciated in His solemn parables of the Judgment, with their terrible warnings as to the consequences of unrepented sin. We must believe that salvation when it comes will be according to truth and right, the turning of the soul from evil to good and from selfishness to service. We must believe, in a word, that Christlikeness will be the standard by which every life must be finally tested.

This is the permanent truth in the doctrine of the Judgment, the third of the three great doctrines in which Christian faith has expressed its conviction concerning the future. It is the assertion that the final outcome of the universe will be ethically satisfying, an outcome satisfying the conscience as well as the heart of man.

CHAPTER XII

THE GROUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

IT may seem to some readers of the preceding chapter that we have raised many questions only to leave them unanswered. It is well, therefore, to remind ourselves before we go further how much has been affirmed. The hope we have described includes the expectation of self-conscious existence and moral progress after death for the individual, and of the steady growth and final triumph of Christ's cause in society. It makes room for trust in God, and service of man, for continued fellowship with Christ, and ultimate conformity to His character, for labour for and joy in the transformed humanity for which He gave His life. These are great things for which to hope. If we can be assured that our confidence is justified so far, we shall be well content.

What reason, then, have we for believing that our hope is well founded? Granting that we have correctly defined its nature, what are the grounds on which it rests? This is the second of our three questions, and to it we shall devote the present chapter.

In the past at least four kinds of argument have been used in support of the Christian belief in immortality; arguments historical, philosophical, ethical, religious. Let us see how far they are able to bear the weight which is put upon them.

1. *The Historical Argument*

On the face of it the historical argument seems the most simple, direct, and convincing that can be given. This bases faith in immortality upon the Resurrection of Jesus. We believe that we shall live again after death with Jesus because Jesus Himself has come back from the grave to assure us of the fact.

For those who on other grounds believe in immortality the Resurrection is indeed, as we have seen, a powerful reinforcement of faith. The assurance that Jesus is living to-day makes it easy for us to believe that we too shall survive death. It gives vividness and reality to our thought of the future, and turns what would otherwise be but a vague hope into an assured conviction.

> 'Jesus lives; no longer now
> Can thy terrors, Death, appal us,
> Jesus lives. By this we know
> From the grave He will recall us.'

But useful as is the argument from history in its place, it is important to remember its limitations. The most that we can hope to prove by testimony is that something happened in the past; but the faith which interests us here concerns the present and the future; and the question naturally arises whether there is not other evidence available of a more direct and first-hand kind.

The experience of the disciples is instructive here. For them, as we have already seen, the Resurrection was not an isolated fact.[1] It was confirmed both by what went before and by what followed after. It was confirmed by what went before. This was not the first time that Jesus had appeared to His disciples. They had been His familiar companions during His earthly ministry. They had followed His teaching, witnessed His miracles, owned His

[1] Cf. Denney, *op. cit.* p. 100 *sq.*

authority, and been drawn by the spell of His personality to acknowledge His Messiahship. 'Who say ye that I am?' Jesus asks of Peter. 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' was the answer (Matt. xvi. 16). This was weeks before the Crucifixion. Long before Easter came the disciples were persuaded that they had to do with a unique personality. The Resurrection was for them the confirmation of a pre-existing faith.

Even in the case of Paul there was a preparation for the Damascus experience. Saul may never have seen Jesus in the flesh, but he was no stranger to His Spirit. He had followed the fortunes of the strange group who owned the Nazarene as Master. He had been present when Stephen was stoned, and heard his dying words: 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit' (Acts vii. 59). As he journeyed to Damascus, his thoughts must have been busy with what he had seen and heard. When Jesus appeared to him on that momentous journey He came to a spirit already prepared.

Still more significant as a confirmation of the Resurrection faith was the experience which followed. I have already described this so fully in another connection[1] that it is only necessary to recall what was there said. We have seen that for the disciples the Resurrection was not an isolated occurrence. It was the beginning of a continuing experience. The appearances of the risen Christ ceased, to be sure, but in other ways He made His presence manifest to their spirits. Their life was still as it had been in the days before He was taken away, a life of communion with His Spirit. He was still their teacher and friend and constant companion, unseen but none the less real and near, and the intercourse to which they looked forward by and by was only a new chapter in an unbroken story.

Is there not a suggestion here for us? If we are to win men to faith in the risen Jesus, we must be able to

[1] P. 102 *sq.*

show that it is a faith which is concerned with the present as well as with the past. We must show that the Christian hope of immortality, as Jesus exemplifies it, answers to a permanent need of man, and is confirmed by what we know of God's working elsewhere.

So we pass naturally from the argument from history, in the narrower sense, to those more general arguments, philosophical, ethical and religious, which have their basis in human nature as we know it to-day.

2. *The Philosophical Argument*

And first, of the philosophical argument. This finds confirmation of the Christian hope in the laws of the human mind. Man longs for the assurance that this is a rational universe, and this assurance we find only in personal immortality. Only in persons, as we have seen, are the great values experienced. Only through the continuance of personality, therefore, can we have any guarantee that the things for which we most care will persist.

For consider for a moment what it means to be a person. To be a person means to be a creator of values. It means to be forming out of the raw material of experience which pours in upon us through the senses, pictures that have beauty and meaning. We call these pictures ideals. They represent not what is, but what is to be, purposes which are still to be realised, lessons which are still to be learned, songs which are still to be sung, prophecies which are still to be fulfilled. A person is a being who is all the time making over the world after the pattern of his ideals, acting out his purposes, learning his lessons, singing his songs, fulfilling his prophecies. A person, in the measure that he is really a person and not simply the raw material of personality, is, I repeat, a creator, a bringer to pass of that which is new and beautiful and valuable and enduring;

a being who meets obstacles only to overcome them, who falls only to rise, who is banished from one world only to find other worlds to conquer; who out of sin and suffering and failure is ever fashioning anew the shining raiment of unconquerable hope.

'Along the earth and up the sky
The Fowler spreads his net:
O soul, what pinions wild and shy
Are on thy shoulders set?
What wings of longing undeterred
Are native to thee, spirit bird?

What sky is thine behind the sky,
For refuge and for ecstasy?
Of all thy heavens of clear delight
Why is each heaven twain,
O soul, that when the lure is cast
Before thy heedless flight,
And thou art snared and taken fast
Within one sky of light,
Behold the net is empty, the cast is vain,
And from thy circling in the other sky the lyric laughters rain!' [1]

But this is only half the story. To be a person means to be a sharer as well as a creator. It means to be capable of entering into the experiences of other persons. It means to rejoice in their achievements, sympathise in their weaknesses, bear their burdens, fight their battles. To be a person means to love and to be loved, to bear and to forbear, to yearn and agonise, to take up one's cross at another's command, to give one's life a ransom for many. To be a person, in short, means to be a social being, multiplying every value which you have created by the new experiences of the infinite series of other persons who will appreciate it after you.

What kind of a world, then, shall we think it to be

[1] Moody, *The Fire Bringer*, pp. 16, 17.

which has produced and sustains such wonder-workers as these? It is an old proverb that *ex nihilo nihil fit*. The stream will not rise higher than its source. If we are adequately to account for the world which has brought persons into being we must posit personality at its source, and unless we are to suppose that the Master Workman has failed in His own creative purpose, we must believe that He will still continue to maintain in existence the lesser spirits whom He has brought into being.

This is the familiar idealistic argument for immortality as it has been used by theists in every age. Plato's form of the argument, based upon the alleged simplicity of the soul, has passed away with the realism of which it was a part. But the essence of it is as valid to-day as ever. It is as true for us, as for the Greeks, that spirit—by which Plato means the ideal or creative principle in life, that which we know at first-hand only in our own self-consciousness—is the enduring thing, the explaining thing, that by which alone we can adequately account for the presence and the persistence of our actual world of meanings and of values.

In its broadest sense idealism is quite compatible with the denial of individual immortality. All that is necessary is that spiritual values should persist, and this is sufficiently conserved if with idealistic monism we believe in the Absolute Spirit in whose infinite experience all values are embraced and persist. This is a view which has been taken by many thinkers, modern as well as ancient. To them we are but transient modes of the Infinite Spirit, temporary vehicles through which, for His own purposes, He expresses a part of His meaning. When we have served our day our place will be taken by other modes, who will serve the divine purposes as well as we. Our real significance as individuals is not in time but in eternity, in the meaning that we have for God, and that meaning, existing once for all, does not require the time relation for its perpetuation.

But however attractive this conception may be to speculative thinkers, it is certainly very different from the Christian hope. The values with which we are concerned are the values of personality as we know it, and require for their conservation the individual lives in which they are realised. Is there any philosophical ground for believing that this hope is justified ?

Obviously there is all the ground that we have for believing in the persistence of our highest values in any form. As our belief in the personality of God stands or falls with our demand for a rational universe, so our belief in personal immortality stands or falls with the insight that the moral values we count highest are indissolubly interwoven with the personal life, in the form in which it is known to us here.

In his suggestive essay on *Human Immortality*, printed in his volume entitled *Limits of Evolution and other Essays*,[1] Professor Howison has recently restated this argument. The essay was suggested by Professor James's Ingersoll lecture of the same title, and is the attempt to supplement the Harvard professor's contention that immortality is possible, with the positive conviction that immortality is real.

Professor James suggests, as you may remember, that we may be living on the hither side of a great sea of spirit which from time to time finds entrance into our little world through the channel that we call the nervous system. This, according to Professor Howison, is good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, for it leaves the nature of this parent source undefined. How shall we pass from the vague background of spirit, which is all Professor James's argument requires, a background which, for all we know, may be nothing more than the Absolute of transcendental idealism, to the personal immortality we require ? According to Professor Howison there is only one way, and

[1] Second edition, New York, 1904, pp. 279-312.

that is 'to adopt the hypothesis, not simply that there are many minds behind the scenes, but that these minds are *our* minds—our veritable and genuine selves; and that the summaries of sense-coloured experiences which Professor James . . . is led to call the only verifiably real meaning of our self, or our mind, are but the more or less dimmed and darkened expressions of those our real spirits, inhabitants of eternity' (p. 292).

Into the details of the argument I cannot go here. It takes its departure from the creative aspect of personality, to which we have already called attention, and amounts to this, that as we ourselves are the creators of our own world, as Kant has long ago shown, we are the most real beings in that world, and therefore that faith in our own continued existence is rationally justified.

To Professor Howison this insight goes a long way. It provides not only for the continued existence of the self, but also for the continuance and final triumph of all the values it has created. 'Once let us settle that we are inherently capable of everlasting existence, we are then assured of the highest worth of our existence as measured by the ideals of Truth, of Beauty, and of Good, since these and their effectually directive operation in us are insured by their essential and constitutive place in our being' (p. 310). For those who are not philosophers, however, it will seem to provide at most for the possibility of such triumph. If persons as such exist, just because they are persons, then all kinds of persons must exist, and with them all kinds of values, the good and the evil, the ugly as the beautiful. Wherein, then, will the life to come differ from this? Where shall we find the guarantee of the moral victory we desire? For this assurance we must leave the philosophical argument in its more general form and consider the contribution of ethics to the Christian hope

3. *The Ethical Argument*

The moral argument is at once the most ancient and the most influential of all the arguments for immortality. It reasons from the disproportion of desert and happiness in the life here to the fact of another life in which this inequality will be rectified. It is the most ancient, for so far as we can see, it was the demand for such a readjustment which led to the replacement of the primitive conception of the life after death as a life empty of moral meaning, with the various positive conceptions whose rise and history we have been considering. It is the most influential, for it retained its hold upon even so acute a critic as Kant. It is to-day, I suppose, the argument which makes the strongest appeal to most of those who accept the fact of a life after death on any other ground than that of authority pure and simple. There is in every one of us an instinctive feeling that good deserves to be rewarded and evil to be punished. For us, as for the generations that have preceded us, the fact that this is so often not the case constitutes the most serious difficulty in the way of our believing in the moral government of God. For us too, as for them, faith in immortality affords a welcome relief from this difficulty by furnishing a sphere for that final adjustment of moral values upon which every healthy conscience insists.

We cannot overlook the fact, however, that there are many earnest people in our day for whom this argument in its older form has lost its force. This is due to the fundamental change which has come over our conception of punishment. We no longer think of punishment as retributive, at least not primarily and exclusively so, but as disciplinary. We recognise that retribution has its place, a necessary and important one, but it is means, not end. The end is moral education, the reformation of the criminal, not his suffering or loss, and it will not be finally

attained until he has been transformed into a useful and law-abiding member of society.

It is inevitable that such a change should have its effect upon our thought of the life after death. The old conception of the judgment as an act which simply registers issues decided here and assigns to each individual the reward or punishment to which his desert entitles him, seems to ascribe to the life after death a significance infinitely less than the present life, where character is being moulded and destiny shaped. The remedy provided by the older theodicy does not seem really to touch the main issue, which is the fact of moral failure itself. It is not the prosperity of the wicked which is the staggering fact, but his sin, and the real reason why we should desire a life after death is not so much that we may be rewarded for being as good as we are, but that we may have a chance to become better.

There is, however, another form of the moral argument which is not open to this objection. It is the argument from the incompleteness of human life. All about us we see in human nature undeveloped possibilities, beginnings that have no ending, prophecies that have no fulfilment. We have already referred, in connection with the philosophical argument for immortality, to the capacity for development which characterises personality, but the observation acquires far greater significance when considered from the point of view of ethics. We carry, each one of us, within ourselves a better self, a soul as yet unborn which is struggling toward the light. Is it never to come to its own ?

In Gorky's play, *A Refuge for the Night*, he pictures under the guise of a chapter of life in contemporary Russia an ever-recurring human experience. We may call it the tragedy of the ideals. It is the birth of these fragile children of the spirit, and their death before they have grown strong enough to stand alone.

The scene is an underground cellar in one of the crowded quarters of a Russian city. As the name indicates, it is the refuge by night of the flotsam and jetsam of the city streets. We see the drunkard, the thief, the harlot, the tramp, the clever vagabond too lazy to work, the sodden, brutalised workman too poor to find a home of his own—birds of prey, all of them, hopeless for themselves and dangerous to others—who have gathered for shelter and refuge in this human nest.

Into this forbidding hostelry drifts one fine morning a singular character. No one knows whence he comes, and no one knows what he wants. He is clad in peasant's clothes and is readily contented with the simplest fare, but he is evidently a man of superior education who has seen better days. He speedily makes himself at home in his new quarters, and one by one makes friends with its denizens. His indomitable cheerfulness attracts them, and his ready sympathy breaks down the barrier of reserve behind which suspicion and jealousy have led them to entrench themselves. He is an apostle of hope who believes in better days coming, not for Russia only but for them. He tells the drunkard of a place where drunkenness can be cured, and bids him prepare for the miracle by believing in the possibility of his own sobriety. He tells the thief that he has the capacity to earn an honest livelihood, and that it is a shame to waste such cleverness as he possesses in a way so unworthy of his true destiny. He makes the harlot believe in purity and the tramp in industry. So, one by one, we see the ideals born, the seeds of hope that have lain forgotten in the darkened souls pressing their way up through the cramping mould of circumstance to the light.

And then—and this is the heart-break of the play—we see them wither and die before they have taken firm root. There is a quarrel and a murder; the police enter the cellar; the strange guest vanishes never to return. The

thief is carried off to jail, the drunkard returns to his cups, the wanton to her sordid trade; the night of despair settles again into the same impenetrable gloom on which the curtain first rose.

But it leaves behind—and this, I suspect, was Gorky's purpose—a haunting sense of what might have been. If only the chance had lasted a little longer, if only the environment had been a little more favourable, all that the friendly stranger saw as possible might have been made real. For there is no one so low, so degraded, so utterly dehumanised, but carries within him, could you but find it, and cherish it, and nourish it, some seed of beauty or of heroism which is worthy of immortal life.

We did not need Gorky to tell us this story, though we thank him for reminding us of what we are too often tempted to forget. We have seen this ancient tragedy repeat itself again and again at our own doors, in the crowded tenements of our great cities, in the loneliness of the farm, in the cramping pettiness of village life. We have seen ideals born only to die, and hopes grow green only to wither. Is this really to be the end of all? Are these prophecies to have no fulfilment? Is this hope born to have no resurrection? If so, how vain to call this a moral universe or to believe in the conservation of moral values which alone makes life worth living!

Or, suppose we shift our point of view and consider the matter not from the side of the helped but of the helper. Must we really believe that when the stranger vanished it was to leave his work undone? Was the scene on which the curtain fell really the last? Had he gone never to return? Must we believe that all the great hearts that have broken over human misery and failure have broken in vain; that all the lessons half taught are blotted out never to be relearned? Or is this really only the beginning of a drama that is going on, the first scene of a play that will have its ending in the life to come? Everything

within us that believes that truth is better than falsehood, and love than hate, and heroism than meanness, and beauty than ugliness, cries out that the latter is the true answer, and this instinctive faith in the persistence of the highest values is the true moral argument for immortality.

4. *The Religious Argument*

But we have not yet completely stated the case. There is one step more to be taken before we feel the full force of the evidence. As we have passed from history to philosophy, and from philosophy to ethics, we must pass, finally, from ethics to religion, for only here shall we reach the full assurance which the soul desires.

In order to appreciate the force of the religious argument for immortality, it is only necessary to recall a familiar story. It is the story that Jesus told nearly nineteen centuries ago, and that we know to-day as the parable of the prodigal son.

This old story gives us in briefest compass the religious argument for immortality. The prodigal is man, and the father is God, and the bond that drew the wanderer home from the far country to the open arms that were waiting to receive him is a bond that it will take more than death to sever. If Jesus is right in His teaching about the divine fatherhood, immortality follows as a matter of course.

Here first we reach the true foundation of the *Christian* hope. It is not based simply or chiefly upon the capacity of man, valuable as this may be in its witness to a life to come, but upon the purpose of God. 'God,' said Jesus, 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him' (Luke xx. 38). Can we believe that the Father, who has made man in His image for fellowship with Himself, will suffer His child to perish?

Here, too, we recognise the real contribution of Jesus to faith in immortality. It was not merely that He rose

from the dead but that He lived such a life that resurrection seems credible. It was because He realised as no one before Him had ever realised, what divine Fatherhood might mean for a human life, and because He entered so completely into the experience of sonship. It was, in a word, because He showed us once and for all what man at his best may be, and so made belief in his ultimate destruction for ever impossible.

In the light of this insight we must revise our statement of the historical argument for immortality. What Jesus gives us is not simply a new fact but a new value. He raises our conception of humanity as a whole to a higher level. He gives such dignity to human nature that its endless continuance seems natural and worthy. He discloses to us all capacities within ourselves which justify our instinctive hope, and in the new experience of sonship into which He leads, gives us the pledge of endless life in the Father's house.

So it must continue to be if faith in immortality is to maintain itself. The Christian hope stands or falls with the Christian experience. As the chief argument against immortality is the apparent worthlessness of human life as we know it, so the chief argument for immortality is the existence of men and women who deserve it. In the measure that humanity produces characters that are like Christ will faith in an immortality of Christlikeness seem reasonable.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VALUE OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

We have considered the different arguments for the Christian hope: historical, philosophical, ethical, and religious, and have found that they all reduce to a form of the argument from value. It is because immortality seems supremely worthful that we desire it, and because we expect the universe to answer our highest desires that we believe in it.

In this respect our faith in immortality rests on the same basis as all our other ultimate convictions. All that makes life beautiful, and society noble, and character secure, we hold in the last analysis by the venture of faith. Our belief in God as well as in man, in society as well as in the individual, in science and art and civilisation as well as in religion, in the possibilities of progress in this life as well as in the life to come—all alike persist because we dare to trust where we cannot prove, and act where we do not know. The leaders of humanity in its forward movement have been men who have made this venture, who have trusted the best they knew, and dared to believe that the universe would sustain their trust. If we can prove that our faith in immortality belongs to the best we know, we shall have placed it upon a foundation on which we may safely leave it.

Here is the point at which the modern challenge of immortality is most formidable, since it takes the form

not so much of a denial of the fact as of scepticism as to its value. This final doubt we must resolve if we are to establish our hope upon a firm foundation, and to this attempt we turn in our last chapter.

A word at the outset as to the principle by which our judgment is to be determined. What is the standard by which we should test the value of the Christian hope?

Clearly it must be the standard by which all our highest values are tested. It is the standard of the ideal personality in its twofold aspect of individual efficiency and of social serviceableness. Judged by this double test, what has faith in immortality to contribute to our life?

What, in the first place, has the Christian hope to contribute to the efficiency of the individual? What can it do to make us happier, stronger, and more successful in our daily living?

The answer most commonly given to this question is that it contributes comfort. The hope of immortality is the great solace for life's misfortunes. It is our consolation in bereavement, our compensation for failure. When death robs us of the familiar presence on whose companionship we have relied, it is reassuring to know that we may look forward to a meeting by and by. When injustice has defrauded us of our rightful place here, we may find satisfaction in the promise that in a world to come the wrong will be righted.

But much as we need comfort, there are things in life that we need more. Strength is more important, and courage, enthusiasm and loyalty, consecration and heroism. You cannot win battles with doctors and trained nurses alone. It is good to be helped up when you are down, but better never to fall. Even on the bloodiest field the whole outnumber the wounded, and the condition of barracks and of camp counts more for the welfare of the army than the hospital. What has the Christian hope to offer us here? Can faith in immortality reinforce the

motives which make for effective living as well as insure against the penalties of failure ?

I do not see how any one, who has once faced in his own thinking what the Christian hope really means, can doubt this for a moment. We value life in proportion to its possibilities, the satisfactions that it offers, the powers that it commands and the prospects that it opens. The man who believes in immortality sees opening before him an endless vista of new experience, and so a limitless sphere for the acquisition of new knowledge and the exercise of new power. Such a consciousness cannot fail to give a new dignity to personality and a new joy to living.

My thought goes back to a day not many years ago when I stood by the bedside of a friend whose earthly life was drawing to a close. He was a man of whom it could be said with more truth than of most men that he had used his opportunities to the full, and could look back over the record of his life without regret. And yet it was impossible to associate him with the thought of death. His mind was active and alert, eagerly interested in every new experience, never more just and delicate in its adjustment than in the weeks which had cut him off from outer contacts and shut him up to the world of his own thoughts. He was a man who had schooled himself by unremitting discipline to a loyalty to duty which shrank from no sacrifice, but he had learned also that other and rarer lesson that duty willingly followed leads at last into paths of pleasantness and peace. He was a man who had borne great responsibilities greatly, adding year by year new burdens, but never laying down what he had once taken up; yet with all, he was never too busy to lend his ear or his heart to a child's need. He had, indeed, a genius for friendship. No one touched him without trusting him, and to many who were not his kindred after the flesh, he stood in a father's place. Wise in counsel, he was tender in sympathy, yet he dared to blame as well as praise when blame was needful. A humble Christian,

he walked daily with his God, and in his presence doubt could not live.

Is it possible to think that it would make no difference if one were to be persuaded that there was no further work in store for such a personality; that this finely tempered instrument, fashioned by the Master Workman at so great a cost, and fitted to such high and sacred uses, was to be cut off by the accident we call death, from all possibility of further service? Would it not, on the other hand, be an inspiring and uplifting thought, stimulating to new self-discipline and completer consecration, to believe that what we saw here was only the beginning of a service that would have no end; that as each year had brought new opportunities of growth and new experiences of friendship, human and divine, so it would continue to be through all the years that were to come? We feel that there is something in humanity at its best that deserves to live for ever, and it will make a difference in our estimate of the significance of living whether or no we believe that what we feel ought to be, will be.

In fact, when men tell us that they do not desire immortality, they are thinking of something very different from the hope we have in mind. They are thinking not of life as it may be, but as it too often is. They are making their past the measure of their future. They are thinking of the monotony of life, its weary repetition of familiar experiences, its empty formalities, its deadening routine. Why, they ask, should we desire to perpetuate that which we have found so little satisfying? What is there in life as it is lived here to make its endless continuance desirable?

But it is not such a life as this for which the Christian looks. His standard is not quantitative, but qualitative, not more existence, but richer experience. His mood as he contemplates the future is one of adventurous curiosity. He looks upon the next life as a boy looks upon

this, as a wonderland of undiscovered possibilities, full of things to be done and to be learned and to be enjoyed. There are men who in this life have seen the boy's dream realised. Life has been better to them than they expected. Why may not this be the case in the life to come? It is conceivable that this hope may prove mistaken, but of one thing we may be sure, that it would be a good thing if it were true. If we define immortality in the Christian sense, it is a thing devoutly to be desired.

The same conclusion is reinforced when we pass from the standpoint of individual efficiency to that of social serviceableness. Here, too, faith in immortality proves an asset of the highest value.

For consider what this faith really means. It means that in all the complex relations which constitute what we call our social life, we are dealing with beings who are capable of an unending development. We are not simply working for to-day or for to-morrow, but for unnumbered ages, not simply for what we can crowd into a single lifetime, but for issues of a significance so momentous as to stagger the imagination. Here surely is a motive too powerful to be neglected by any who have seriously measured the forces which are making for and against the welfare of society.

I am well aware that faith in immortality has often been held in such a way as to discourage social effort. The other world has loomed so large that the concerns of this world have seemed petty, and its interests negligible. Soul has been set against body, heaven against earth, the life to come against the life here.

It was inevitable that such undue depreciation of the present world should lead to a reaction. We are coming to realise the unity of life as never before. We see how inextricably personality is interwoven with its environment; how intimately and in how many ways body and soul are related; how large a part is played in spiritual

development by the outer forces and activities which an other-worldly Christianity lightly dismissed as physical. We are not trying to destroy the world but to transform it, not to crucify the flesh but to sanctify it. We are beginning to take Christ's prayer literally, and instead of abandoning earth that we may win heaven, we are trying to make earth like heaven.

We cannot doubt that this is a great gain. It gives reality and naturalness to the religious life. It presents a firm foothold for faith in the facts and experiences of every day. It makes room in the service of Christ for every talent and for every activity. It consecrates science and industry and art, as well as religion, to the service of God.

But the question still remains: What is to be the outcome of it all? What is the end which the complex machinery which we call modern civilisation is designed to serve? Is it simply the perfecting of the race for the life that they have still to live on earth? Or, is it the training of humanity for the heavenly citizenship that shall have no end?

This is a question which deserves far more serious consideration than is often given to it. If it is a worthy object of effort to work for a better social order to be realised some time in the future, even if that order be confined to the comparatively small group of beings who may be living on earth at the time, how much more splendid and inspiring will it be to feel that we are working for a society which includes the living and the dead, and will endure throughout all ages.

We are not dealing here with vague generalities. We are discussing practical motives which affect daily living and bear in the most direct way upon our familiar activities.

Let us make the issue quite concrete by considering some specific form of human activity. There is, for example, the question of education. We hear much on every side of the need of more practical methods of educa-

tion. The demand is for a training that will fit men for life. But what kind of life is it for which men are to be fitted? How long is it to last, and under what conditions is it to be lived? If its sphere is to be the particular trade or profession which is chosen, and its limit three score years and ten, then one kind of training will be sufficient. But, if the person to be trained is an immortal soul, destined for communion with God, and the service of humanity through endless time, then a new factor is introduced which alters the problem. There is not less need of technical training, so that the specific thing first to be done shall be done well, but there is need also of a wider culture. The imagination and the sympathy need to be trained. The pupil needs to be shown what are the permanent values, equally important in all ages and for all persons. We are learning that even for this life culture may be an asset of the highest practical importance. We work better when we understand the end for which we work, and we work more contentedly when we can relate our own work to that of others as parts of a single comprehensive plan. But often the plan seems so narrow, the end so little worth while. Faith in immortality meets this difficulty by providing a new outlet adequate to the highest capacities of the soul, and so a new motive for self-development. The teacher who feels that he is dealing with a deathless personality will bring a fresh enthusiasm to his work.

Or, take that most perplexing and many-sided problem of improving the economic condition of the wage-earner. How little has been accomplished in proportion to the effort that has been expended. Consider, for example, the matter of housing, as it meets us in the congested centres of our great cities, or the problem of unemployment, with its terrible accompaniment in social degradation and vice. In face of the sheer magnitude of the task, how easy to be discouraged! How pitifully small what we can accomplish for any single generation,

measured by the greatness of the need! But, if we are working not for one generation, but for all time; if it is not simply the question of raising the standard of comfort one peg higher, but of opening the door for immortal spirits into a larger life; if the beginning that we see here is really the beginning and not the ending, then the case is altered. A new and higher motive has been introduced, and effort that seemed Quixotic becomes legitimate and rational.

So, we might multiply illustrations indefinitely. There is the problem of the backward races. If this life ends all, how plausible the argument of those who tell us that all attempt to introduce these hewers of wood and drawers of water for humanity to the ideal interests to which we ourselves ascribe the highest value, is a mistake; that it must only make them discontented and impatient, and unfit them for the humbler tasks for which they were designed. But if they, like ourselves, are really God's children, meant to live for ever, and with eternity to grow in, how splendid a thing it becomes to have a part in awakening them to a consciousness of their immortal destiny.

The practical value of faith in personal immortality as a motive to social service has been verified over and over again in experience. The men who have been pioneers in social regeneration have, with few exceptions, been men who have had exalted views of the dignity of the individual. Long before our modern economists had begun to tell us of the dependence of vice upon an unfavourable social environment, Christian missionaries had established in the slums of our great cities centres of helpfulness and sympathy which were a practical demonstration of this truth.[1] And to the darkest and most destitute regions of

[1] It is a suggestive fact that the first step in the regeneration of the notorious Five Points, the most dangerous section of New York City, was the establishment there in the year 1854 by the Reverend Mr. Pease, a Methodist missionary, of what has since come to be known as the Five Points

the earth the hospital, the workshop, and the school have been carried by men and women who have been sustained in the sacrifice and the renunciation which the task required, by their faith that the little they were able to do to help men here was so much contribution toward preparing them for an eternal destiny.

There are many persons to-day who are ready to recognise the beneficent work done by foreign missionaries for the social welfare of the peoples among whom they have been working, who have no sympathy with the religious motives which animate them. Why, they ask, can we not have the hospital and the school without the doctrines that go with them? They forget that it is faith in the realities which the doctrines express which alone has made the missionary enterprise possible. Had it not been for the belief that man is an immortal spirit capable of communion with God, and meant for fellowship with Him throughout all eternity, we should have had no Livingstone or Moffat or Paton. James Russell Lowell saw this clearly when he spoke the striking sentences which have often been quoted, but which will bear quoting again :—

'When the keen scrutiny of sceptics has found a place on this planet where a decent man may live in decency, comfort, and security, supporting and educating his children unspoiled and unpolluted, a place where age is reverenced, infancy protected, womanhood honoured, and human life held in due regard,—when sceptics can find such a place ten miles square on this globe, where the Gospel of Christ has not gone before and cleared the way and laid the foundations that made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for these sceptical *literati* to move thither and there ventilate their views. But so long as these men are dependent on the very religion which they discard for every privilege they enjoy, they may well hesitate

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House of Industry. Mr. Pease was led to take this step because he discovered that it was impossible to save individuals without changing their environment. The social work of the Salvation Army is a more recent example of the same kind.

to rob the Christian of his hope and humanity of its faith in that Saviour who alone has given to men that hope of Eternal Life which makes life tolerable and society possible, and robs death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom.'

So far, then, is it from being true that the hope of individual immortality is inconsistent with the social welfare, that the two go hand in hand. Whatever heightens the value of the individual heightens the value of the society to which he belongs, and reinforces the motives which are making for social regeneration.[1]

If you wish great results you must command great motives. If man is to live at his best, his face must be turned to the stars. There is no motive comparable in power to the faith which believes that man is an immortal being, made for God, who in His own person has given the great example of service, and destined some day to be conformed to Him.

Here, as always, we come back to God. It is faith in

[1] From a recent number of the *Survey*, the official organ of the charitable workers of America, I quote the following significant sentences. They are taken from a letter protesting against the disposition manifest in certain quarters to make comfort the standard of progress, and to confine social effort to a purely economic programme:—

'There are stages,' the author writes, 'in the formation of a social ideal. For many of us social workers the first stage was represented by an extreme pietism. We were brought up in an atmosphere of soul-saving and world-storming. In some of us the missionary zeal burned to incandescence. No peaceful, cornfed philosophy was ours, but we were ever battling against 'the strong salt spray of some large sea.' With a point of view overlooking all time and all worlds, we could not very well construct a village ideal of life. We had a peculiar scale of values, one in which the value of a single human soul outweighed all else, not only power, and fame and gold, but also homely human happiness. The intrinsic worth of the individual was the cornerstone of our faith, and had no relation to his social environment or personal qualities or achievements. For the lowest and most loathsome human creature that ever wallowed in the mire of crime or bred in the fetid pens of degeneracy we must dare all, sacrifice all, even our own normal development, for we had in our hands his eternal destiny of glory or pain. No one who has once entertained views like these, however time and experience may have modified them, can ever accept with complacency or final satisfaction the picture of a well-fed, and well-housed, efficient and orderly people that you now present as an ideal. Much less will such a picture stir him to his best efforts.'

I believe that these words give a true insight into the psychology of service.

Him, and the experience to which it leads, which alone give to human life value enough to make its endless continuance seem a thing to be desired. 'After all,' as Dr. Rainy once said, near the close of a life which had been more than usually full of sustained and satisfying activity, 'immortality is a dreary prospect if our Father is not in it.' [1]

In these words of the venerable Principal of the New College, we have, in a single sentence, the Christian apologetic of immortality. If we wish to make faith in another life credible we must fill this life with value. And the one sure way to do this is to discover with Dr. Rainy that 'our Father is in it'—the Father whose loving purpose for us and for all mankind Jesus has revealed, and in whose service, which is at the same time the service of our fellowmen, we find our freedom and our peace.

[1] *Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. ii. p. 292.

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